THE

SIEGE OF VIENNA;

From the German

OF

MADAME PICHLER.



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THE

SIEGE OF VIENNA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

To the lovers of landscape scenery, there are few districts more interesting than that through which the traveller passes on the high road from Vienna, by way of Gratz, towards Italy. The Mürtz and Murr valleys, with their bright streams, verdant promontories, and cheerful hamlets, have been especially admired and celebrated. Even at the commencement of his journey, as the tourist, first quitting the lowlands, ascends behind Glöcknitz towards the great mountain named the Sömmering, the route affords many beautiful prospects; and not the least beautiful as you approach the environs of the market-town of Scholtvien, which, situated

in a narrow defile betwixt lofty precipices, forms an entrance into the rocky wilderness of Styria.

Advancing from this point, we soon behold the grand features of the Sömmering, with its diversities of bare crags and luxuriant woods, and can distinguish the admirable *chaussée*, which, formed with great expense and labour, leads by zig-zag turnings to the very summit. On this road, which is sometimes cut through solid rocks, and elsewhere supported by mason-work on the declivities, a singular effect is produced to the eye of the distant observer, when long trains of heavily laden waggons, each with ten or twelve horses or oxen, are seen slowly winding up the mountain. Amidst sheltering woods, half-way to the top, is picturesquely situated a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin, and the resort of many pilgrims;—whence the continued ascent is so gradual that the summit is reached without much fatigue. Here, on one side, the eye revels amid the boundless varieties of scenery in Lower Austria,—its flourishing towns, villages, rich meadows and corn-fields, extending to the distant blue hills of the Hungarian frontier, while from an opposite direction, opens the romantic region of Styria, where dense forests, glittering streams, rocky cliffs, and scattered cottages, afford a prospect for the painter or poet, still more attractive.

On the very highest ground, which forms the boundary betwixt Austria and Styria, stands the monument of Charles VI., to whose indefatigable public spirit, aided by Prince Eugene of Savoy, the country is indebted, not only for the *chaussée* of the Sömmering, but for the finest buildings by

which Vienna has yet been adorned. At the time, however, when the events took place which form the subject of our story, the Austrian frontier was more distant, and the proper entrance into Styria was by the narrow defile and fortress of Clamm, of which there now exist only some ruins, but which in the seventeenth century, was a tolerably substantial castle in the possession of the baronial family of Völkersdorff. Well-defended by high towers and ramparts, which in early ages must have been of no little importance, their castle had a most imposing appearance from its rocky site, if surveyed from its valley beneath on the road to Neustadt. From this castle, down into the narrow defile, there extended a strong rampart, provided with towers at equal distances, which in time of need could be defended, and offered too many points of resistance to be separately contested by the enemy. The heights on the other side of the fortress were equally well protected, and it was only through a gateway into the narrow ravine attended by vigilant guards, that Austrian passengers could enter Styria.

The fortress itself consisted of several rambling and incongruous buildings, the production of different eras and different rulers. The more elevated parts of the castle, with the strongest towers and thickest walls, were ascribed to the dukes of Rabenberg, who, during the ferocious and devastating inroads of the Huns and Avari, found high watch-towers indispensably requisite, against the sudden attacks of rude marauders. At the period, however, when our story commences, the oldest

and loftiest portion of Clamm Castle was abandoned as a refuge only for bats and owls; the present inhabitants being of opinion that the lower parts of the stronghold were more convenient. Even these had become in some measure dilapidated; for during a series of expensive campaigns under Wallenstein, the Archduke Leopold, and against the Turks, the barons of Völkersdorff had embarked their own money in the public service, and encountered heavy losses. A once large and profitable domain became rapidly impoverished. One residence after another was either sold or mortgaged, till at length, no other property remained to them but this ancient castle of Clamm on the Styrian frontiers, with its adjacent grounds in the valley behind the Sömmering.

Hither, as often as his military duties permitted, Frederick, the last resident baron of Völkersdorff, retired to spend his time in domestic tranquillity. He had married Mademoiselle de Ferronay, a young Hungarian lady of great beauty, and to their perfect happiness the only existing obstacle was, that for some years they had no children, in consequence of which, the baroness, in her devotions at the chapel of Maria Zell, made a solemn vow to the Virgin, that if Providence blessed her with offspring, her first-born should be devoted to the cloisters. Within the next year she gave birth to a daughter, at which event Völkersdoff doubly rejoiced, as he could not without some reluctance have devoted a son to the monastic life, instead of the chivalrous career in which his ancestors had been so eminently distinguished. Afterwards he had the felicity to become the parent of two sons

and of another daughter. But no sooner were the young men able to wield a sword and mount a charger, than the baron found them employment, in that profession which alone was considered worthy of a nobleman. They had commissions in separate regiments, and were only occasional visitors of the castle.

With regard to the daughters, there was betwixt them so great a dissimilarity both of character and features, that a stranger could not have supposed them to be sisters. Hence arose in the family a system of favouritism, Catherine, the youngest, being her father's chosen *protegée*, and comparatively neglected by the baroness; — Ludmilla, the destined bride of the church, was in figure tall and graceful, with features, which, though regularly beautiful, wore even in early youth a marked seriousness of expression approaching to melancholy. But the powerful impression which her appearance never failed to make on every beholder depended especially on the effect of her large dark eyes, though these were generally downcast, and shaded by long raven-black eye-lashes. Moreover, her dark eye-brows were strongly defined on a high open forehead, and according to the fashion of the times, her hair simply parted from the crown of the head, hung down in numberless ringlets on either side, heightening by contrast the dazzling fairness of her pale and thoughtful aspect.

Catherine, on the contrary, had no pretensions to dignity of figure, but was not less beautiful; her form, in its full, but delicately rounded proportions, might have afforded a sculptor the finest of models. Her countenance, instead of being pensive and

grave, was continually lighted up by the most perfect good humour, and a half-childish playfulness of expression. Ludmilla, at a first interview, produced a far greater sensation; but Catherine's charms won on the heart by degrees. One was framed to be admired and wondered at,—the other to be beloved.

Betwixt their dispositions, as already mentioned, there existed the same powerful contrast. Ludmilla had naturally a restless mind, and great quickness of apprehension; nor had either cost or pains been spared to afford her instruction in every acquirement then considered suitable for a young lady of rank. She had, besides, the command of several languages; was well skilled in history and geography, and played admirably on the theorbo; but the possession of these accomplishments, was not unaccompanied with a considerable degree of pride. Ludmilla had formed the highest notions of the dignity attached to her future destination in life, and even in early youth, often fancied herself invested with the rank and responsibility of a mother abbess. But if such feelings tended to give a reserve and hauteur to her demeanour, its chilling effect was often counteracted by a single glance of those large dark eyes already mentioned, when their long silk fringes were uplifted. In truth, a vivid imagination, and impassioned ardour of temperament, unconsciously to herself, animated all her words and actions.

The mind of her sister, less rapid in its progress, but undisturbed by the workings of imagination, was therefore more clear and rational. Debarred the same advantages of careful instruction and

superintendance that Ludmilla possessed, Catherine gradually, and by her own unobserved industry, possessed herself of many accomplishments. Without brilliant flashes, her spirit sustained a calm equable glow. She was humble in demeanour, quiet, benevolent, and affectionate. Ludmilla excited admiration by her scientific performance as a musician,—but when Catherine sang, her clear, melodious voice often left a deeper impression on the heart.

Notwithstanding such discrepancies of character, the sisters were mutually and sincerely attached to each other. It might have been expected that Catherine's natural good temper would be severely tried by her mother's neglect, but this was compensated by the baron's unalterable kindness. Even in her childhood, Völkersdorff had planned for her favourite, a marriage with Sandor Szlatinski, the son of a brother officer and friend, who now lived in retirement at his estate on the Polish frontier. The excellent disposition of this youth, the prudence with which he afterwards conducted himself betwixt conflicting parties at that perturbed era, and the firmness he displayed in supporting the principles of his house in favour of Austria, secured him universal respect, and justified the baron's selection of him for a son-in-law. Years passed away, and the marriage, though approved by all parties, had still been deferred, owing to the distracting state of public affairs, and other obstacles at which Szlatinski expressed both impatience and anger. At length, in the end of the year 1677, their marriage was fixed for the following spring, but meanwhile sudden and severe illness attacked

the Baron Völkersdoff; he survived only long enough to have an interview with his intended son-in-law; in whom, during his last moments, he expressed unalterable confidence; requesting also that Szlatinski, in the absence of the two young barons, would act as guardian and protector of the forsaken and afflicted family. With deep emotion Szlatinski solemnly engaged to fulfil this duty; — which his own feelings, unsolicited by others, would have suggested. Völkersdorff died, surrounded by those he most loved, but his death proved only the commencement of a train of evils, which impended over the baronial house. This melancholy event, with the deep affliction it caused, particularly to Catherine, rendered a long delay of the intended nuptials unavoidable, and Szlatinski was under the necessity of returning to his father's estates. The property of Völkersdorff, already so contracted, was now more than ever impoverished by a series of disastrous occurrences, especially hail-storms, and accidental fires, which followed in rapid succession, and yet more by the dishonesty of servants.

In the year 1679, a new visitation of Providence reduced the already suffering family, to almost utter despair. The younger of the two absent brothers, who was quartered with his regiment at Vienna, suddenly died of the plague, which then raged in that capital.

Within the next year, also, ere they had recovered from this affliction, the pestilence spread from Vienna into the country, visiting even the remote mountainous districts, which had been thought perfectly secure. The baroness Völkersdorff, anxi-

ous to protect her daughters from this appalling malady, and being afraid to trust Clamm Castle to the care of mercenaries, remained there alone, and sent her daughters with a suitable escort, to the house of her brother, the Baron de Ferronay, who resided in Presburg.

CHAPTER II.

So retired hitherto had been the life of the sisters, that until this event, they had never beheld any larger town than Neustadt, and the impression made on their minds when they arrived at Presburg, (then the capital of Hungary), differed according to their opposite characters, but was remarkable in both. They had entered into a new world, where Catherine was at first timid and reserved, felt herself alone in the midst of society, and fervently longed to be again amid the peaceful scenery of her accustomed mountains. By slow degrees this painful embarrassment wore away. Her aunt and cousins were kind and attentive; and with her uncle the Baron de Ferronay, she became an especial favourite. Her natural vivacity and cheerfulness returned, and she partook with zest in the social amusements, which, among the higher ranks at Presburg, seemed now to form nearly the sole occupation of life. In her admiration of the costly dresses worn by her own sex, and the splendid military accoutrements of the Hungarian nobility, Catherine was too simple-minded to reflect on the contrast afforded by her own rustic and unpretend-

ing costume. It was not long, however, before the baron's liberal presents to his nieces remedied this defect, and he seemed especially rejoiced when for the first time Catherine appeared to advantage in her new attire; on which occasion it was allowed, that in personal charms she far outshone many rich and celebrated beauties of the capital.

Ludmilla had from the commencement been less timid, and far more powerfully excited than her sister. She felt as if her past existence had been only a dream, and that now for the first time she awoke to real life. With a degree of interest, which could not have been expected from her sex and years, she listened to conversation on the important public events of that period, — on the intrigues of the court, and the peculiar situation in which Hungary was then placed with regard to Austria and other neighbouring states. Through frequent intercourse with the gay court of Louis XIV., with Vienna, and with foreign universities, the better society of Presburg had acquired a degree of intelligence and vivacity of tone by which she was powerfully attracted. Nor was she less struck than Catherine by the outward grandeur of houses, dresses, equipage, and retinue. From the inmost depths of her mind were awakened talents, energies and impulses, of which hitherto she had been herself wholly unconscious. With rapidity she assimilated in costume, demeanour and conversation, to the habits and example of the new world into which she had been thus thrown. She accepted her uncle's costly presents of dress with the grave dignity of a princess receiving the homage which she knows to be due; and thus the full effect being

given to her commanding figure and striking features, the sensation she produced in the *beau monde* at Presburg was almost unequalled.

In a short time the younger baronesses Völkersdorff, were looked upon as the principal stars of attraction in the most distinguished assemblies. At such marked attention, Catherine, if somewhat elevated, was not without embarrassment and timidity; and by her humble, yet playful manners, and regard to the wishes of others, especially her cousins, seemed as it were to apologize for the admiration she involuntarily excited. Ludmilla, on the contrary, treated every one in a manner *de haut en bas*, which repulsed freedom, and asserted her own superiority. For her aunt and cousin she could not entertain respect. She looked on them as uninformed and narrow-minded, and, knowing that by such connections she could not be *loved*, was not averse to the idea that she might possibly be *feared*. Towards her numerous admirers she maintained a dignified reserve and gravity of demeanour, suitable for the destined bride of the church; she listened to their flatteries as a mere customary tribute, and the interest she took in society, depended on occasions when she could share in conversation respecting politics and literature, with individuals who were neither flatterers nor professed admirers, and, who would give attention to her remarks, as coming from one who could not possibly be influenced by party spirit, or selfish views.

Hitherto the gallantry of the Hungarian cavaliers towards the sisters had been harmless; their hearts were unmoved by any attachment, and both

were so mindful of their engagements already formed, as to consider it impossible that intercourse with the world could change either their destiny or inclinations. When the day had been spent in amusements, and they retired to their own quiet apartment, Catherine fondly dwelt on the praise which she often heard bestowed on Szletinski; and Ludmilla continued as usual, to act in imagination, the part of mother abbess. Both also looked forward anxiously to the period when the disappearance of the still spreading malady would enable them to return home; immediately after which, it had been agreed that Ludmilla should take the veil, and Catherine be united to her lover.

Among the various entertainments of the Hungarian nobility, dancing assemblies were not of course omitted; nor did the music or festive splendour on these occasions, fail to bewilder and dazzle the novices. Ludmilla indeed, took little or no part in the immediate purpose of these meetings, for except at small family parties, she seldom danced, though universally admired when she could be prevailed on to do so. Catherine, however, preferred this amusement above all others. She tripped with light heart and fairy grace through the glittering throng, nor was ever disturbed by the consciousness how many admiring eyes she drew on herself from one sex, or how spitefully envious were the glances that followed her from another.

At this period occurred an event, which was then of much public importance, namely, the election of a palatine for the kingdom of Hungary. To the

great satisfaction of those who were on good terms at court, and who wished to avoid popular commotion, the choice fell on one of the counts Esterhazy, whose assumption of office was celebrated by brilliant festivities, balls, banquets, and illuminations. To one of these entertainments, from which the gay world had formed great expectations, Ludmilla and Catherine, along with the family of their uncle and aunt, were invited. So remarkable were the preparations for this fête, that for many days previous it formed the sole topic of conversation in Madame de Ferronay's drawing-room, and every guest who made his appearance there was questioned on the subject.

Amidst the discussions thence arising, the sisters had often heard of the young Count Zriny, as a most important personage, who would make his appearance at the intended festival. This interesting cavalier was a son of the unfortunate Zriny, who had many years before been engaged in treasonable plots against the Austrian emperor, and had suffered for his crimes on the scaffold. As the last scion of an old, and justly renowned family, and distinguished from infancy for promising talents and personal beauty, the present count had in boyhood attracted the notice of the Emperor Leopold, who kindly took him under his protection, and procured for him every advantage of education which the best instructors could supply. Finding that such favours were followed by corresponding improvement, he allowed the youth to assume in public the family title, which had been suppressed; at length named him as one of his chamberlains, and took every opportunity of

evincing towards his *protegé* the utmost liberality, and almost paternal affection.

Towards his benefactor, Zriny appeared also gratefully attached, and never failed in his attendance, on occasions either of business or pleasure, when by personal exertions he could render himself useful to the emperor. Consequently it happened, that he was often entrusted with commissions of importance, which were not well adapted to his years and experience; thus becoming an object of envy or censorious remark to the elder nobility. Among the fair sex, it is true, his uncommon symmetry of person, graceful demeanour, and agreeable conversation, procured him many partizans, whilst from his leading compatriots, both of Austria and Hungary, the marked favor of Leopold, with his own superior talents and advantages, excited only malevolence and hatred. Of this disposition on their part, Zriny was thoroughly aware; but it seemed not to cause him a moment's disquietude. As little did he permit his attention to dwell on the injurious reports which his enemies endeavoured to found on the conduct of his sister Helena, a highly talented, but very ambitious lady, who had first been the wife of George Rakotzy, Prince of Neidenburg, and afterwards married his successor, Emmerick Tökely. Of these noblemen it was publicly known that both had declared themselves against the Hungarian government, but of Prince Emmerick in particular, rumours were spread that he had entered into a secret league and correspondence with the Turks in order to overthrow his lawful sovereign.

In spite of such reports and machinations, Zriny

maintained firmly the ground on which the Austrian emperor had placed him; nor did any one venture in his presence, to start even the remotest allusion to those attacks which were privately hazarded against him. On the contrary, he met with profound respect from all quarters, and gross flattery from individuals who prudently sought to win his favour.

CHAPTER III.

At present the eyes of the Hungarian noblesse were universally fixed on Zriny; one party distrustfully watching all his movements, while others anxiously hoped to secure him as a partizan for their own interests. It was known, moreover, that he had just now returned from Paris, whither the emperor had sent him with important commissions, and where, in the brilliant court of Louis, he had appeared to singular advantage, and attracted much attention. Perhaps for no better reason than the expected presence of this distinguished courtier and diplomatist, it had been agreed that the guests at the approaching grand ball should be arrayed in French instead of native costume.

On this occasion, Ludmilla, aided by her usual activity of imagination, enjoyed, for the first time, the unspeakable pleasure of dreaming that she had been transported into the higher circles of the far-famed French capital; and was herself so becomingly attired as to present one of the most attractive figures in the whole assembly.

The ball had at length commenced, and Cathe-

rine had already danced more than once, when a whispering among their near neighbours, whose eyes were all turned in one direction, made the sisters aware that some new and distinguished guest had entered the room. Accordingly, they soon saw a young man in very brilliant costume, who was received with such respectful ceremony by the host and hostess of the mansion, as to leave no doubt of his rank and consequence. For some time he walked up and down the room, along with Count Esterhazy, the newly elected palatine, and they had an opportunity of making their observations at leisure. The stranger was rather above the middle height, and his air and demeanour such as unequivocally betoken the man of the world. He was attired in red velvet, with an embroidered belt closely buckled, which showed his fine figure to advantage, while on his left shoulder glittered the golden key, proper to his office of Lord Chamberlain. His sword-hilt was adorned with a knot of embroidered ribbons, and similar knots were attached to his knee-bands and shoulders. At the wrist his sleeves were turned up with white satin, and his ruffles were of fine Flanders lace. His neckcloth was of the same costly material, and he wore it tied in a careless knot, with long ends hanging down on his breast. According to the fashion universal at that period, his luxuriant light hair parted in the middle, hung down in graceful curls on his breast and shoulders, giving an effect of almost feminine beauty to his youthful countenance, — to the penetrating glance of his full blue eyes, and the smile which often played on his finely formed lips.

"That is Count Zriny! the emperor's favourite, —how handsome he is! what a beautiful dress! How good-natured he looks." Such were the whispered exclamations that circulated among the fair guests in the ball-room, as with stolen glances they watched all his movements.

Ludmilla's attention in particular was rivetted by this brilliant apparition, nor could she abstain from gazing at him. But as amid the whole assembly the sisters were almost the only guests not already known to Zriny, his attention also was soon attracted, and especially by Ludmilla. The marked expression, of those eyes, which were constantly directed to him; her extraordinary beauty, and the singularity of her taking no share in the amusements of the evening, excited both admiration and curiosity. He made inquiries regarding the sisters; learned who they were, and was warned that the eldest never danced on any public occasion, being destined by her family for the cloister.

"For the cloister!" repeated Zriny, speaking to himself, "and with that symmetrical form, with those enchanting features, those ardent looks from beneath the dark clustering hair, and such grace in every movement!—what a sacrifice!—But a trial must be made whether this bride of the church will condescend to interchange a few words in common parlance, or if there be any remote chance of inducing her to walk a single minuet."

According to etiquette, however, he first danced with the lady of the mansion, and some of her more distinguished guests, attracting unanimous applause by the grace and skill displayed in his performance. He then approached Ludmilla, and with the

polished *tournure* of the French language, begged for the happiness of being her partner for the next minuet. Thus addressed by the individual who formed the universal object of admiration, Ludmilla blushed deeply, and forgetting all her previous resolutions, gave him her hand, and allowed herself to be led among the dancers. Catherine and the Mademoiselles de Ferronay, looked after her with astonishment. A whispering ran through the room, and by degrees there formed round this beautiful couple a circle of spectators, full of curiosity to see the lady abbess dance; for this title had been given to Ludmilla, not merely on account of her future destination, but her grave and dignified demeanour. Of all this she was thoroughly aware; it vexed, but it did not dismay her. On the contrary, she was determined to show that she had not previously declined dancing from want of skill, but of inclination.

At length the couple who preceded them retired from the boards. Zriny gently took her hand, and for a moment, it vibrated as if struck with electric fire, which pervaded her whole frame. With the dignity of a queen she made her first curtsies, and stood looking with a kind of disdainful triumph on the crowd who gazed on her. For *this* she had courage, but she did not *thus* venture a second time to encounter Zriny's glance; for their eyes had once met, and the expression in his was never to be forgotten. Again he took her hand, and led her to the place where the *tours* were to begin. With such ease and elegance did Ludmilla achieve the attitudes and movements of the minuet, that the admiration of the whole assembly was even

audibly expressed. Zriny was not insensible to this tribute of applause, and exerted himself to appear worthy of such a partner. Never had he danced with more precision and grace. At length, as they floated past each other, his eyes caught the glance of Ludmilla, and sympathetic fire seemed interchanged betwixt them; again as they changed places, their eyes met, and her bosom heaved visibly. Now came the time for joining hands right and left,—she *must* look at him, and having gained courage by the first attempt, did so with more steadiness. But how numberless and overpowering were the emotions which that one gaze excited! Her hand still trembled, however, while respectfully, yet tenderly, he held it a moment longer than the rules of the dance required. However, she did not seek to withdraw it, but reached him the other with more confidence; and when at the close of the dance they both advanced with open and outstretched arms towards each other, it seemed to Ludmilla, as if some supernatural voice exclaimed, "Fall into his arms that are open to receive you—Perish in his embrace and on his bosom—for that is your destiny!"

From this moment onwards, Ludmilla's whole character and existence were changed. As in the highlands of Switzerland, after a long winter, summer commences without any previous mediation of spring; the snow melts from the meadows, and the grass rises up; the trees and bushes, which were dry and sterile, array themselves in a few nights with buds and green leaves, and flowers spring up on the banks of rivulets, that are scarcely released from the ice; so, all of a sudden, the grave and

haughty nun was changed into a girl glowing with love. This first affection broke out with all that vivacity and fire which were naturally to be expected from one of her ardent temperament. She had now forgotten all her former engagements, not only the predestined convent, but even her return to Clamm Castle, and her lonely forsaken mother. Her whole existence was excited by, and made up of passion. Zriny could not have been the man of the world, which he really was, nor the previous conqueror of so many female hearts, if he had remained insensible to the advantages gained, even at the first interview with this new acquaintance. Such victories were not new to him, but he had not always on former occasions resolved, as he now did, to make a guarded and sparing use of the advantages which he had won. The novelty and singularity of the circumstances — his knowledge that this young lady was betrothed to the church, consequently interdicted from any sublunary attachment, conferred on her, in his estimation, peculiar charms. Through the remainder of that night, he devoted his attention exclusively to the beautiful stranger; and the guests, with astonishment, beheld a man who might have had for his partners, not only the most attractive, but the richest and noblest in the assembly, thus attaching himself to a poor rustic baroness, who, as they affected to think, had no distinguishing characteristics, except *bizarre* manners, and an intolerable degree of pride.

This ball was followed by others, at which the sisters were also present, and Zriny's attentions continued. Thus, it soon became understood in

public, that the celebrated courtier and diplomatist — the emperor's favourite, had become the declared admirer of the "lady abbess;" for so Ludmilla was now always nicknamed, with a peculiar significancy of tone. The belles, who had hitherto imagined that they possessed some claims on his attention, were of opinion that such infatuation was both unaccountable and unpardonable. —At the same time, they tried to console themselves with the belief that the caprice would not last long. Meanwhile, Zriny had been regularly introduced to the Baron de Ferronay, who, whatever might be his feelings respecting the young count's behaviour towards Ludmilla, could not venture to close his doors against the acknowledged protegé and confidant of the emperor.

CHAPTER IV.

One formidable difficulty was thus got over, and Zriny could visit Ludmilla, though not so frequently as he could have wished, nor was she altogether satisfied with her present situation; for either out of spite or from prudential motives, her aunt and cousins seemed to have laid down an unalterable law, that the lovers were never to have one moment for conversation alone. This caution, however, so completely failed in its object, that it only induced Zriny to contrive means for clandestine meetings;— and henceforth an undisturbed intercourse with the object of her affections completed the transformation of Ludmilla's character. Zriny's intellectual superiority now attracted her far more than the grace of his personal demeanour at their first meeting; while in the wild flights of her imagination and her ardour of temperament, he also found charms by which he was irresistibly and irrecoverably influenced. He had not only made her the mistress of his affections, but the confidante of his thoughts, and was delighted when her active mind and sympathetic energy followed the train of his ideas. He imparted to her his own views of the great world;

he spoke of the various situations of different European states; especially on the predicament in which his native land of Hungary was then placed towards Austria. Above all, he painted in brilliant colours the court of Louis XIV., dwelling especially on the high regard which was there paid to female influence, and the enjoyments derived from the cultivation of literature, and the arts in the better circles at Paris and Versailles. So exciting were these descriptions, and so perfectly in unison with the latent principles of Ludmilla's mind, that it was not to be wondered she should become more than ever attracted to the individual to whom she was indebted for her knowledge of this new world, and united to whom, she might one day hope even to enter its magic circles.

Through the whole period of the carnival, and even some time after its termination, did this intercourse continue. The offended belles of the capital, whose only consolation had been in their predictions, that the young courtier's mind would soon change, had confined themselves hitherto to irony and sarcasm. At length, however, they became exasperated, and directed their open censure and malignant calumnies against both Ludmilla and Zriny. To Catherine's quiet mind the danger had been long apparent; she had admonished and warned, but in vain; for her elder sister was too proud to admit of any such interference. At length, however, Catherine was roused to new and more serious efforts. With the ardour of sincere affection, but a calm and clear understanding, she pointed out the dangers of Ludmilla's situation, and reminded her that the solemn vow made by

their mother, could not with impunity be broken or evaded. She told her, as much as prudence warranted, of the scandalous remarks which were now circulated in society—finally, implored her no longer to give way to an attachment, which on every principle, whether of religious duty or worldly prudence, must be held ruinous and destructive.

These well intended expostulations might perhaps have been despised *now* as formerly, had not Ludmilla herself become aware of approaching evils, which hung over her like a thunder-cloud. The rustic mountaineers of Clamm Castle had in beauty and attractions quite outshone their cousins, and this had proved a source of bitter vexation to the Baroness de Ferronay. Without communicating her design to any one, she had therefore written to the Baroness Völkersdorff at Clamm Castle, informing her of the unsuitable acquaintance which Ludmilla had formed, and how completely she appeared to have forgotten the duty she owed to her mother, to religion, and the honour of her family. She was diffuse and elaborate in describing the rules and precautions which she had forsooth adopted, in order to prevent any involvement of this kind, and which had all been in vain; her affection and care being thrown away; and she concluded with expressing her opinion, that under such circumstances, great as would be her sorrow, and that of her whole family, to part with their dear relatives, it would yet be advisable, if the two young ladies were immediately removed from a dangerous scene, where it was quite impossible to prevent one at all events, if not both, from being drawn into destruction.

On receiving this letter, the Baroness Völkers-

dorff was excessively alarmed. Gladly she would have sent for her daughters, being most anxious for their return home; but the cause which led to their sojourn at Presburg was by no means removed. The plague, though not with the same virulence, still existed in her neighbourhood; and she would not venture to put the lives of her children in actual danger. In this emergency, as on all great occasions, she had recourse to her domestic chaplain; but the confidante whom she had hitherto trusted in that capacity, had been recently called away by promotion in the church, and was succeeded by another priest, named father Isidor, from Vienna, who had come to Clamm Castle powerfully recommended.

To this clergyman the baroness imparted her maternal fears, and by his counsel it was resolved that he should write in name of his patroness to the Baron and Baroness de Ferronay, explaining, that as it would be highly improper to bring the two young ladies home to the district of the plague, it was especially desirable that they might be sent for a time to some remote country seat on their uncle's estates, where they would be out of harm's way. At the same time Ludmilla received a letter, also written by the priest's hand, authorized by her mother, wherein the enormity of her conduct, her neglect of every duty, and the everlasting punishment she would thus draw on herself, were painted in the most glaring colours.

These letters arrived precisely at the time, when Catherine had again made an attempt to work on her sister's feelings, and Ludmilla, under such combined influence, expressed gratitude for such af-

fectionate care, and promised to reflect on the suggestions offered.

In truth, there was observed soon afterwards such a complete alteration of conduct, between Ludmilla and Zriny, as surprised every one, and gave rise to various remarks and surmises in the fashionable world. By degrees, Zriny bestowed more and more of his attention on Catherine, proportionately withdrawing it from Ludmilla, who also assumed gradually her former seriousness of demeanour, with a notable addition of gloom and abstraction.

Astonished, but not without a mixture of other feelings, Catherine received the distinguished marks of attention paid to her by the Viennese courtier. He often led her into conversation, made her the confidante of his hereditary misfortunes, his father's fate, and his own melancholy temperament. — Chance had surrounded him with splendour and luxury, — honours had been heaped on him; yet the image of his father bleeding on the scaffold, had never ceased to haunt his imagination: he saw that there was no happiness for him in this world; nay, every one with whom he became connected was drawn into the vortex of his own gloomy destiny. He led her to believe it was this fatality which had induced his attachment to an object, that by the most sacred obligations was placed beyond the sphere of earthly love, and to imagine how great was the pain caused by this discovery, and by the necessity of combating a passion already become powerful. In short, he did not introduce himself to Catherine as a lover, but rather as an unfortunate man in search of sym-

pathy and consolation; by which means he made a deep impression on the heart of this innocent and unsuspecting girl. If Ludmilla had been won by his personal accomplishments and brilliant talents, Catherine was no less interested by his misfortunes. In truth, her good nature and vanity were at once enlisted in his cause, and she was the less inclined to keep watch over her own heart, as she looked on herself as a betrothed bride, and never for a moment suspected that the interest she felt for Zriny, could interfere against that steady and quiet confidence which, from early youth, she had been taught to repose in Szlatinski. Zriny appeared before her, not as a lover, but as a being of a far higher class; wild as his expressions often were, she confided in whatever he said, not from any inward conviction that he was in the right, but because she supposed it impossible that a man so much admired, and who had seen so much of the world, could be in the wrong.

Meanwhile, Ludmilla observed this daily increasing intercourse, and to the astonishment of all, seemed to regard it with the most perfect composure. Nay, she even expressed her satisfaction, that the brilliant courtier had found a new object for his attentions, and that she was again left in peace. Moreover, she undertook in turn the part of monitress, and seriously warned Catherine against too frequent interviews with a man, who, whatever were his talents, did not seem to possess much of the virtue of constancy.

At this unexpected change, the family of the Baron de Ferronay were exceedingly perplexed, and although the quiet manner in which Catherine

received the attentions paid her, did not allow them the same ostensible cause for apprehension, yet remembering her engagement to Sandor Szlatinski, they were by no means satisfied with this new attachment; and on the whole, they decided on taking advantage of the first fine weather in spring in order to visit their country estate. The baron, however, looked incredulous when his lady assured him, that there was no longer any need for watchful solicitude respecting Ludmilla. He seemed to doubt the reality of a change so sudden, but in other respects, was perfectly contented with the proposal of retiring into the country, which could now be carried into effect without remarks or opposition. He advised, however, that the baroness should at all events keep a watchful eye over Ludmilla.

CHAPTER V.

The resolution to quit Presburg for the country was announced in the family circle, to the great discontent of the young ladies of Ferronay, who by no means wished that the amusement of the capital should be so soon broken up. Count Zriny was reduced *au desespoir*, and complained that this unforeseen change, which deprived him of his kind and sympathizing confidante, was a new and cruel machination of that implacable destiny which never ceased to persecute him. Catherine herself was deeply grieved at the separation from a friend whose conversation had become so interesting, and who had of late appeared so unhappy. She wept not merely for herself, but for his distresses; but at last, with prayer and patience, submitted to the will of Providence, which had decreed a separation, perhaps indispensably requisite for her own and Sandor Szlatinski's future peace. Of all the family, however, Ludmilla appeared the most deeply depressed; though to her it might have been supposed that the departure from town was a matter of indifference. Gloomy and irritable, she shut herself up in her own apartment, and was

frequently occupied half the day in writing; though with regard to the subject, or form of the composition, Catherine was kept wholly ignorant.

Whilst they were in this mood of mind, the day arrived for their departure. The whole family party, Ludmilla and Catherine of course included, mounted on horseback; they were followed by a numerous escort of attendants, also by wagons loaded with clothes and furniture; so that on their arrival at the Danube, the procession occupied the whole length of the flying bridge on which they crossed the river. Rapidly did they leave behind them its verdant banks, and under the bright sky of a beautiful spring day, proceeded through the far-stretching plains, presenting an appearance not unlike that of an eastern caravan, from their number and the clouds of dust, which even at several miles' distance announced their approach.

By short daily routes, so that the ladies might not be too much fatigued, was the journey continued; and the sisters of Völkersdorff found even here in the flat country, not a little to excite their admiration. Far as the eye could reach, there was neither hill nor rock to be seen; a vast extent of level country stretched around, faintly bordered, it is true, by blue hills, which were not distinguishable from clouds on the distant horizon. There were no shady woods, no clear streams rushing through their pebbly channels, as in Styria. However, on these plains now waved verdant and rich crops of corn and wheat; the blessing of Providence seemed to rain on the country, and to reward an hundred-fold the labours of the husbandman. The villages also wore an aspect which to

the sisters was quite novel ; — house joined to house without garden or trees — even without the ornamental vines and gourds, which in Austria cling round the cottages. But the neat little windows were adorned by painting in various colours. Even the walls were chequered by a kind of *pattern* drawing. Before every house-door there was a projecting vestibule, and often were noticeable the mounds of earth, covering pits ; in which, instead of granaries, the farmer keeps his stores. The novelty of the whole scene was completed by the national dress of the people ; the men on working days with their short linen jerkins, trunk hose ; or on holidays, having the blue jacket flung over one shoulder, and the rest of their attire fitting close, so as to show the figure to advantage, and giving a half martial air of defiance to the *tout ensemble*. The women were yet more remarkable. The boddice was particoloured, and often interspersed with gold ornaments. They had white aprons, of which the borders were adorned with embroidery, in coloured worsted ; beneath which the dress was tucked up, that they might walk with more freedom, and showing the red and yellow boots, which reached the middle of the leg. About the head and shoulders was worn a long narrow stripe of white linen, with embroidered ends, fastened behind to the red worsted girdle. The jerkin, with its wide sleeves, was, at the shoulders and collar, embroidered in worsted, and the whole dress (especially the boots and linen bandaged round the neck, breast, and shoulders,) gave indication of an approach to eastern habits.

But no less strange than all this, appeared to

Ludmilla and Catherine, the arrangements of their journey. On the whole road, an inn or house of public entertainment was out of the question. So prudently, however, was their route contrived, that without much deviation from the main road, they arrived always by dinner-time or in the evening, at private residences of the Hungarian landowners, which often adjoined the villages. According to the system in Hungary, many families of distinction, both rich and poor, lived, winter and summer, on their estates, and in habitations which were seldom entitled to the name of castle; nor indeed, did they differ much in outward show, from the ordinary farm-houses by which they were environed. At such stations the whole of our numerous party made a full halt, and were invariably entertained with the most cordial hospitality, and even a superfluity of refreshments. If the simple appearance of these mansions outwardly had surprized the sisters, they wondered yet more at their inward proofs of opulence. Frequently, where, from the outside, one would have predicted only the poverty, as well as the simple manners of cottagers, there was visible a store of massive silver plate, with valuable furniture, and dresses made in cloth of gold, at once proving the wealth of the inhabitants, and the close neighbourhood of the Turkish frontiers; which then encroached much farther on Hungary than at the present era.

On the third day they reached their uncle's property, named Ferrona, situated a few miles only from the Turkish boundary. The castle stood on an extensive plain, was regularly and strongly built, having a lofty centre tower, provided with a

clock, and a handsome terrace sloping down to the garden, which afforded a perfect specimen of the formal style then prevalent. There were long straight walks, with tall wide hedges of evergreens on either side, cropped close and smooth; also embowered walks of chesnut-trees, where the branches were regularly trained to exclude the light, and form a perfect gothic arch. There were, moreover, pyramids of yew, and temples of holly; also fountains, where, from gigantic stone basins, tritons and other monsters, spouted up the water, which falling back, produced a soothing, never-ceasing murmur. With the castle the sisters were well content. It was indeed, the finest they had hitherto seen, and on their arrival a large and pleasant apartment was assigned them, opening from the corridor, that with pillars and open arches ran along the inside of the court.

In the castle was now continued the same sort of life, with regard to social intercourse, which had been kept up on the journey, only with this difference, that the baron's family were for the most part at home, exercising that hospitality towards large parties, which they had before claimed for themselves. According to the liberal system of the country, all visitors were received with hearty welcome; sumptuously entertained, and dismissed with entreaties soon to return, while other guests directly succeeded them. It appeared to the sisters as if the whole of the Hungarian gentry, were constantly travelling from house to house, and with regard to most of the families, who lived constantly on their estates and interchanged visits, this was actually the case. Notwithstanding such convivi-

ality, the Baroness de Ferronay did not omit to keep a watchful eye over her nieces, especially Catherine, of whose prudence she was now most apprehensive, but who endured such surveillance with perfect equanimity, having nothing to conceal or indeed to regret, except that Zriny might suffer in mind, from being deprived of a friendly confidante. Ludmilla, on the contrary, became every day more and more gloomy; withdrew herself more and more from society, and would not partake in any amusement; so that Catherine began to entertain serious apprehensions for her health.

During this bustling life at the castle, there was no want of various pastimes, especially hunting, riding out, in pleasure excursions and dancing assemblies. On the latter occasion, the orchestra was generally occupied by gipsies, and it was not without great wonder, that Catherine, for the first time, saw these dark-complexioned children of a foreign clime, whose appearance, features, attire, and mode of life, all betokened their far distant origin.

Sometimes curiosity led her to address them, but she always firmly refused allowing them an opportunity of looking at her hand, and prophecying her fortune; while, on the contrary, Ludmilla, eagerly grasping at foreknowledge, would gladly have gained from these swarth sybils some confirmation of her own secret hopes.

Some weeks had passed in this manner, visits were paid and received, minor *fêtes* and formal banquets alternated; but the festivity did not suffice to restore cheerfulness to the sisters, whose hearts were in various ways depressed; but both

deeply so. It is true, there was less of the dark shade in Catherine's destiny, and her gentler spirit was more inclined to submit quietly to the lot assigned her. Yet she also had her hours of silent grief, when, as an affianced bride, she inwardly reproached herself for inability to forget the attentions of Zriny, and when she witnessed the gloom and discontent that prayed on Ludmilla,—emotions the more dangerous on account of efforts made to shut them up in her own bosom, and conceal them from all the world. Besides, Catherine was tormented with suspicions that her sister must be engaged in some secret correspondence. Very often Ludmilla was deeply occupied in writing, and used the utmost precaution to avoid being observed. Many times she walked alone about the castle and garden, when Catherine dared not accompany her. She received intelligence, though no one knew how or whence it had come; while any attempt to gain explanation on these points, only roused her to anger and reproaches.

Meanwhile arrived St. Sophia's day, and with it a grand festival, given in compliment to the Baroness de Ferronay, who was named after the saint. Already were preparations made at the castle, which pointed at the arrival of numerous guests, who would fully occupy all its apartments. Men and maid servants were at work, toiling and scolding each other in hall, corridor, court, and garden; so that in the confusion it was not possible to keep a watchful eye on all, or even to notice every person who, on one pretext or another, found admittance. Catherine faithfully attended her aunt, assisting in all her domestic labours, while Ludmilla, as usual,

kept proudly aloof, and scarce ever quitted her chamber. By degrees the guests arrived, friends, relations, neighbours, almost all on horseback, and followed by numberless servants with baggage on packhorses, or even in wagons drawn by ponies. To her amazement, Catherine beheld one vast cavalcade after another enter the castle court, and could not imagine how it was possible to dispose of so many people. According to Hungarian fashion, however, the impossibility was got over to the perfect satisfaction of all parties. And now commenced a life of unrestrained festivity. The elder gentlemen smoked their long pipes, gamed, drank, and hunted; the ladies rode out a pleasuring, the younger cavaliers accompanying them; and in the evening the whole party re-assembled over a rich banquet in the great hall, which, *á la mode antique*, was adorned with family pictures, scutcheons, armour, and stags' horns.

In this hall, on this grand festival day, was laid out a long table, at which the guests took their places, arrayed in the full splendour of national costume. The gentlemen wore their tight jerkins and pantaloons, embroidered with gold or silver; the short fur cloak, lined with red or blue silk, hung over the left shoulder, and was fastened round the neck with a clasp, usually set with pearls and precious stones. Before sitting down to table, every one laid aside the *kalpute*, (Hungarian cap,) which was often enriched with an *agraffe* of brilliants, fastening the rich fur and plume of heron's feathers; also the belt and sabre, which were always studded with gems and gold. The female dresses were not less magnificent; the boddice, and long-trained

gown being either of massive silk, or rich Turkish gold cloth, and liberally adorned with pearls; the wide sleeves, reaching only to the elbow, and the aprons were of costly lace. The married women wore on their heads richly embroidered veils, while the young ladies, for the most part, had only ribbons or pearls in their hair.

Catherine was lost in admiration of all this grandeur. The splendour and variety of the scene overpowered for an interval the melancholy thoughts by which she was usually haunted. On Ludmilla, however, no such impression was made. More gloomy, and more abstracted than ever, she sat amid the gay throng, seemingly racked by some one ruling idea, and in a state of most painful anxiety. The banquet was long protracted. Hussars, dressed in the respective uniforms of the families whom they served, and glittering with gold lace, were the attendants. The side-board was loaded with gold and silver plate, and native wines of the finest quality. During the entertainment, a ludicrous contrast was afforded by a number of Sclavonian servants, who, in their wide linen dresses, with wild staring looks, stood at the door, and looked as if dazzled, and utterly confounded at the splendour within.

At length the banquet had ended. The richly-dressed Hussars, and Sclavonian servants poured into the hall to clear away the tables, place wax lights in the lustres, and to convert the dinner apartment into a ball-room. Ere long, the castle resounded with notes of the liveliest music, rousing the hearts of the younger guests of both sexes. As usual, the orchestra was made up by gypsies,

having for their leader a self-taught child of nature, who, without being able to read a single note of music, could yet play in a masterly style the most difficult dances. The gipsies mustered a strong party. Their sombre, but not ungraceful figures; the glaring colours in which they had thought proper to attire themselves for this festival; and their intelligent, though wild physiognomies, attracted many remarks. The self-taught artist who led their band, was a good looking personage of middle age, and was followed by others with violoncelloes, drums and flutes; also by women with triangles and Turkish crescents. One young man was in exterior different from his comrades, and attired neatly in Hungarian costume. A peculiar blackness of complexion, and bandage over one eye, which had probably been injured in some marauding expedition, together with a handsome shape and graceful demeanour, distinguished him from his companions.

Twice did the gipsies, playing a wild march, parade round the hall; then collected themselves in a corner, and began the music of the dance. Irresistibly was the applause of every one attracted by their leader, who touched his instrument with unusual dexterity, and drew from it the softest and most melodious tones. At one time he played slow Sclavonian airs, almost slumbrous in their melancholy softness; then struck up a wild Wallachian melody; and, lastly, had recourse to the national dance, now measured, now unrestrained; now playful as if in mockery, but abruptly changed into the commanding and majestic; so setting not only the heels, but hearts of his auditors in mo-

tion. But the graceful French minuet and Austrian country dance were not forgotten, and a cordial spirit of enjoyment seemed to animate the whole party, Ludmilla alone excepted; who, since the entrance of the gipsy band, had looked on them with visible perplexity, and in her whole demeanour betrayed unusual agitation.

During a pause in the amusements of the evening, the young swarth-coloured gipsy with the bandage over his eye, begged permission that he might be allowed to show his abilities in a Hungarian dance, which the baron granted. A young girl stepped forward with him, and from the very commencement, both displayed a degree of spirit and grace, which irresistibly commanded admiration. In picturesque attitudes, keeping within a narrow circle, while he seemed with condescending dignity to receive the homage that she paid to him. However, it was not to his partner only that his regards were directed. Many times it appeared to Catherine, as if his eye wandered in search of Ludmilla, who also seemed more than ever perplexed and agitated. An admiring circle of spectators collected round the dancers, and while all were thus watching them, a gipsy woman, with large gold rings in her ears, and a bright red *bandeau*, drew near to Ludmilla, and offered to tell her fortune. Catherine would have repulsed her, and Ludmilla stood irresolute. At that moment the mysterious dancer whirled past, at the same time casting on her a look full of meaning. Ludmilla then stretched out her hand to the gipsy, who muttered a few words in broken German, and retired. Ludmilla seemed greatly struck, soon

took an opportunity to steal away from the assembly, and hastened to her own apartment, where, on Catherine's following her, she requested to be left alone.

On Catherine's return to the hall, the young gipsy had already ceased to dance; but every one still spoke loudly in praise of his performance. The baron would willingly have given his guests the amusement of seeing the same dance repeated, and looked about for the youth, but he had left the room. It was not doubted that he would be found in the servants' hall, whither, probably, he had gone in quest of refreshment, but there also he was inquired for in vain. The search was continued through the stables and court; at last, in the neighbouring village; but with no better success: the gipsy was vanished. Recourse was had to his companions, who answered, that the youth was to them a stranger, having joined their party only a few days before, when, on hearing of the grand fête at Ferrona, he had proposed to go with them, and try his fortune at the castle as a dancer. However, he had not as yet derived any substantial benefit from the applause bestowed on him, for the fête was not over, and the gipsies were unpaid. Recollecting this circumstance, all were inclined to give over the search, having no doubt that the runaway dancer would appear of his own accord to receive his money. The festivities of the day were to be closed by a splendid supper. The tables were again brought into the great hall, covered with silver plate, and loaded with viands.

For the servants, also, in a wide hall below, there was spread a table with suitable refreshments, while

the gipsies, by permission, established themselves round a clear blazing fire, which they had kindled in the open court; for, to them, the being within doors, and having a roof over their heads, seemed a most unnatural restraint. In this situation, however, they were amply supplied with wine and food, and the echo of their choral songs, often rose above the tumultuous mirth in the baronial hall, reminding many a one of the handsome young dancer, whose sudden disappearance had given rise to endless remarks and conjectures. Among the loud and merry guests, Catherine sat silent and abstracted, for she had now an especial cause for sadness. A second time she had gone to inquire for Ludmilla, and found that she had retired to bed, feeling much indisposed. This indeed was not unexpected, for Ludmilla had seemed ill through the whole day; but Catherine could not help fearing that the attack was serious; perhaps her disorder was a dangerous fever; and, alas! this happened in a strange house far from home; far also from any town or medical attendant.

Baroness Ferronay had sent several times to make inquiries after the invalid, but without success, for the door was locked. In this there was nothing strange or unaccountable, for in a large house so full of company, it was natural to guard against any mistaken intrusion. Endeavours were made to tranquillize Catherine, who seemed much alarmed at her sister's absence: however, she remained in a state of racking anxiety, and with great impatience waited for the termination of the long banquet, which did not break up until after midnight.

As soon as it was practicable, she escaped from the party, and hastened to her chamber. In the castle court all was now silent; the gipsy band were gone, only some embers remained of the fire beside which they had supped, which, occasionally rising into a flame, cast a melancholy doubtful light on surrounding objects, casting also a glimmering reflection on the long open corridor, through which Catherine was obliged to pass. At this moment, the whole scene appeared to her gloomy and ghostly, and as the faint flames rose and fell, it seemed as if spectral shapes were gliding around her in the court below, and along the walls of the corridor.

At length she had come to the door of the apartment which the sisters occupied jointly. She knocked repeatedly, but received no answer. She tried the lock, expecting it would open as usual, but in vain. "Good Heavens!" she exclaimed, "if Ludmilla perhaps has fainted, or is dying, and thus left so lonely and forsaken!" Mustering all her strength, and in great terror, she shook and rattled the door; but at that moment a *chapeur* overtook her with a light in his hand, having been sent by the baroness, who had observed Catherine's departure. Understanding the cause of her alarm, the man also tried to force the door without success: he then set the light on the floor, and ran to fetch a master-key; by which means, at length, the door was opened. Catherine rushed into the room, and to the bed, but it was empty. The servant followed. The uncertain gleams of their single light, illuminated the apartment but scantily. She searched more and more narrowly about, but

all was chill and desolate. "In God's name, where art thou, Ludmilla?" cried Catherine, terrified almost to death, and trembling with apprehension as the light revealed one corner of the large apartment, lest she should see her sister lying senseless or dead; for no other solution of the mystery occurred to her. The servant who carried the light could not help smiling when he was desired to hold it under tables, and behind wardrobes, where it was impossible that any one could be concealed; but all was in vain!

The search was ended, and as the window had strong and close iron bars, it was obvious that Ludmilla must have gone out by the only mode of egress which the room afforded. Under this conviction, Catherine's self-possession was completely overcome; with tottering limbs she sank on a chair; her ideas grew confused, and reason threatened to forsake her. The *chapeur*, who was a faithful old servant, knew not if he should run to fetch help, or remain with the young lady, who seemed on the point of fainting. To the relief of both, steps were heard on the corridor, and the baroness made her appearance, wishing, herself, to ascertain what had happened to Ludmilla, and what could be done for her. Astonished, she saw Catherine pale and speechless on a chair, and the faithful Iwan beside her, who, in his broken German, was vainly attempting some words of consolation.

The baroness interrogated, but Catherine was unable to answer, and Iwan explained as well as he could what had occurred. "Oh! she has been run away with, or gone willingly to her own ruin!" cried the baroness. "Run away with,— run away

with, my lady!" sobbed Catherine, scarce audibly; for she would not admit the idea of her sisters' having done aught that was worthy of blame. "There must be a pursuit after her," said the baroness. "Iwan, run and tell the baron, and let the hussars saddle their horses. Good heavens! to think that such scandalous adventures should happen in my house!" With these words she retired, followed by Iwan, and Catherine was left to recover herself as she best could in solitude.

Very soon the whole house was in uproar. Some little timewas indeed required before the guests, after the previous dancing and banquetting of the day, could be roused from sleep, and quite brought to their senses; so that many scenes occurred which at another time might have provoked laughter. One cavalier roared for his horse, while still in bed; another starting up, grasped his sabre, to enter into deadly combat with some imaginary foe. Others swearing at being disturbed, groped in vain for their clothes, or having found them, rushed out upon the corridor, making a tremendous noise, in expectation that robbers and ravishers were to be found in the castle.

The confusion and outcries roused Catherine from her stupor, and she began calmly to reflect on the past. Whatever had happened in the course of the day, and in the tumult of company, had escaped her, *now* came vividly to remembrance. Through the whole day Ludmilla had been disquieted. At the entrance of the young gipsy with the bandaged eye, she had been visibly agitated. The vehement emotion which she had betrayed during the dance; her abrupt disappearance after she had spoken to

the soothsayer; her request to be left alone when Catherine wished to follow her; the illness probably affected, and the locking of her chamber door; these circumstances all joined together, explained many former circumstances, and gave rise to many anxious forebodings. She reflected on the whole of Ludmilla's past conduct, on her habits of retiring to her own apartments, her solitary walks, her frequent letter-writing, her mysterious intercourse with some one beyond the castle gates, from whom she gained intelligence; and now, oh heavens! it all at once occurred to her that the young gipsy's figure and attitudes in the dance had only too much resemblance to those of Zriny! What if it were he? But for what purpose came he hither? Wherefore in this disguise? since he had never been forbidden free entrance to the baron's house; and why had he directed his attention exclusively to Ludmilla, without bestowing a single glance on Catherine, whom he used to style his confidante?

These thoughts, however painful and repulsive, could not be suppressed, and Catherine's good sense gradually led her to perceive a connected plan, at which she felt no little indignation, and to which she had been made a contributor. Ludmilla and Zriny had worked on a regularly built scheme; their flight was in perfect conformity with their mysterious proceedings hitherto, and the appearance of the gipsy dancer was no longer a riddle. She burst into tears, not knowing whether she wept on account of Zriny's treachery, Ludmilla's unamiable conduct, or her apprehensions for the fate of a sister, whom, notwithstanding all that had

occurred, she yet sincerely loved, and for whose welfare she was truly anxious. She threw herself into bed, and wept long and bitterly.

The uproar in the castle gradually subsided. By foot or on horseback; with torches and weapons, almost all the male inhabitants, after a due council of war, had indeed forsaken it, dispersing themselves in various directions, with the hopes of discovering or tracking the runaway. In the opinion of most people, among whom was the Baron de Ferronay, the gipsy band should be the first objects of suspicion; for in those times of popular commotion, and sudden inroads of the Turks, it was nothing unusual to find such vagabonds employed for the perpetration of theft, abduction, or any other desperate scheme.

During this uncertainty, and greeted by Catherine's tears, dawned the early morning of a summer's day. After a short and perturbed slumber she arose, and began once more to search the apartment, in hopes that some letter, or other evidence might be found to explain the mystery, but in vâin. Her sister's wardrobe remained for the most part undisturbed, only some linen, and *all her jewels* were gone. The longer she reflected, the more certain she became that Ludmilla had fled in company with Zriny or his agents, and the conviction sank deeply and bitterly into her heart. In both of them she had been cruelly deceived. Zriny had contrived to appear before her almost as a being of a higher order, while his conduct in reality was made up of duplicity and falsehood. What, then, might be her sister's fate, who by this time probably was altogether in his power?

She had scarcely dressed, when the baroness came into the room, followed by some of the female guests of the castle; for the occurrences of the night had roused curiosity to the utmost. All wished with their own eyes to see and investigate, and all spoke at one time. The room and wardrobe were searched and talked over, and Catherine's heart sickened and recoiled at their unfeeling and vulgar remarks. Deeply hurt and wounded, she took refuge in the garden, where, at this hour, all was lovely and silent. Even of the birds, only a few were awake, and twittered in the green twilight of the tall chesnut alleys. Gloomily stood the dark pyramids of yew, like solitary giants rising out of the parterres, laid with variegated sand, and bordered with box-wood. Now rose the sun in cloudless magnificence over the wide champagne country; larks carolled invisibly in the clear air, and at length the whole world seemed to awake into life. The workmen, with their plough-horses in full harness, rattled past the garden, and with respectful wonder lifted their caps to the noble lady, who at this unaccustomed hour made her appearance in the garden. There was the tinkling of bells, as the flocks and herds were driven out to pasture, followed by the shepherd boy in his white cassock, whose song dolefully modulated, ended without cadence in one long protracted melancholy note. All around her seemed tranquil; nature, and those who lived with nature, moved in their wonted course; but in the web of Catherine's destiny, the events of that *one* night had made a rent which could never again be united.

Weeping and praying, she wandered through the

shady walks, and by degrees became somewhat less agitated. Then she heard from afar the trampling of horses, which came rapidly nearer, and she hastened back to the castle. One party had already returned from their search, and were dismounting in the court; but to her eager questions, they could only answer, that their endeavours had been wholly in vain. Others followed, and gave the same unsatisfactory reply. At last came the Baron de Ferronay, who had not indeed found any traces of Ludmilla; but in his own words, about two miles distant, he had discovered the camp of the gipsies; and having, not without some fighting and bloodshed, taken them all prisoners, expected their arrival at the castle, escorted by *chapeurs*, and a band of his own peasantry.

Towards the hour of dinner, all the other explorateurs were collected, and on sitting down to table, the party of the preceding day was complete, with the exception of Ludmilla alone. During the banquet, an uproar in the castle court announced the arrival of the gipsies, who, in gloomy silence, surrounded by a band twice the number of their own, expected that their trial would be a severe one, but resolved sturdily to abide their doom, whatever it might be.

About two hours passed away before they were put to the proof; for great as was Catherine's anxiety, the baron did not consider it necessary to disturb his dinner-party on account of prisoners, who, as he very well knew, could not escape out of his power. At length the long banquet was ended, and De Ferronay took his station in an outer hall, where he ordered the chiefs of the gipsy band to

be brought before him, one after another, and examined them separately. Their answers were almost invariably to the same effect. They had not assisted in Ludmilla's escape, and as to the young man who had been their companion, and suddenly disappeared, he was but a recent acquaintance, of whom they knew no more than he had himself told them. It was but a few days since he had first joined their party, saying that he came from Siebenburgen, where he had lost an eye during a skirmish with the Turks. He had not staid constantly among them, but always made his appearance at their camp, late in the evening. In disposition he seemed reserved and gloomy, at the same time resolute and courageous, so that their captain would have been very glad to secure him for a regular recruit; consequently they made no objection to his accompanying them to the castle, where he proposed exhibiting as a dancer; nor did they wonder at his sudden departure, which had often occurred before, only he had on this occasion staid longer than usual, and they knew not what had become of him.

This was all that on the strictest cross-examination could be extracted from the gipsies; nor did threats of being put to the torture, which they knew was in the baron's power, induce them in the slightest degree to vary their statements. He then had recourse to the gipsy women, whose accounts only corroborated what had gone before, until a handsome young girl made her appearance; who confessed that the stranger from Siebenburgen had entrusted her with a small sealed *billet* to be given

during the ball, to a young Austrian lady dressed in light blue silk, with a white rose in her hair. At first she was afraid to undertake the commission, but the young man had requested her in such moving terms, and was so kind and handsome, that she could refuse him nothing. On this disclosure, Catherine was summoned and interrogated, whether she knew of her sister having received any such communication. Trembling and terrified, she assured the baron that she had not seen the letter, but perfectly remembered the gipsy, who still wore a red handkerchief round her head, as the same who had yesterday evening told her sister's fortune; adding that, immediately after that occurrence, Ludmilla had retired, forbidding Catherine to follow her, and had shut herself up in her chamber.

So ended the investigations respecting the runaway. Though all the families in the neighbourhood were informed of the circumstance, and were willing to aid in the search, yet it appeared utterly hopeless. Some intelligence did indeed arrive afterwards, which afforded but little elucidation, and only roused painful suspicions. Certain of the peasantry on the baron's grounds, who lived close to the Turkish frontier, declared that they had seen a Tartar troop pass on horseback, among whom there was a veiled lady, who seemed in high spirits, and was earnestly engaged in conversation, with a Turk, whose demeanour and dress marked him as the captain of the party, and who watched every step of her horse, often seizing the rein to guide the animal when they came on difficult

ground. The time when this troop was seen, corresponded with the second day after Ludmilla's flight; but it appeared inconceivable to all the guests in the castle, how the pious and rigidly formal "lady abbess," could thus willingly associate with heathens, and enemies to the Christian faith. Catherine alone did not wonder at this; for the interest seemed naturally enough to rise out of the schemes which she suspected to exist betwixt Zriny and her sister; but in the baron's house, she was on her guard not to utter a word alluding to the painful thoughts that lurked in her mind.

Day after day passed, without any intelligence of Ludmilla. It became absolutely necessary to write to Baroness Völkersdoff on the subject, lest the evil tidings should reach her through some other channel, and, if possible, distress her more than if communicated through friends. Baron Ferronay himself undertook the task of writing to his sister, and availed himself of the opportunity to express his wish that Catherine, who was his especial favourite, should still be suffered to remain under his care. This, however, would have been by no means agreeable to the young lady, who found the behaviour of her aunt and cousins exceedingly irksome. From the commencement they had taken opportunities of expressing their contempt for Austrian manners, dress, and education; looking on their own country as infinitely superior to any part of Germany. Since Ludmilla's flight, they had expressed themselves coarsely and unkindly; so that it was Catherine's earnest wish to escape as soon as possible from a circle, in which

she was daily condemned to hear sarcastic remarks on the improper education of young German ladies; on the poverty of the Austrian noblesse, and their vain efforts to compete with the Austrian magnates, who lived on their estates like petty sovereigns, and whom the king himself was obliged to treat with respect.

In her lonely hours Catherine had now no other resort but in tears; but she was too proud to betray her vexation among such uncongenial relations: on the contrary, her indignation at the unprovoked insults to which she was exposed, sometimes roused her to answer them in a tone which they little expected. By that means, however, she could not lessen the irksomeness of her situation, and she longed ardently to exchange the so styled pleasures and splendour that surrounded her here, or at Presburg, for the quietness of Clamm Castle, half-ruined and desolate as it was, reflecting bitterly, that had she never quitted the asylum of her early years, to mingle in the gaieties of the world, she would have avoided all the sorrow and anxiety to which she was now subjected.

Even on her engagement to Sandor Szlatinski, she could no longer look with wonted satisfaction and confidence. Her own credulous vanity had wrought destruction in the flattering prospects, which an attachment to the companion of her youth, had once inspired; she had allowed too much space in her heart for the dazzling image of another, whom, notwithstanding the evidences of his treachery, she was unable to banish from her remembrance. On the other hand, she was clearly

convinced, that had Szlatinski been present during their sojourn in Hungary, his instinctive knowledge of character, and firm good sense, would have protected both Ludmilla and herself from the entanglements and distress into which they had been led.

CHAPTER VI.

The baroness did not acknowledge her brother's letter in due course. The news which it contained had added so heavily to the load of misfortune which she had already encountered, that she became seriously ill: and it was not till after the lapse of an entire fortnight, that her chaplain received instructions to address the baron, expressing her grief at the recent occurrence, and ending with a peremptory request, that Catherine might be immediately sent home. Baron Ferronay was on this occasion seriously offended. In the first place, he felt sorry to part with Catherine; but in the absolute command for her quitting his house, there was conveyed, in his opinion, an indirect reproach, that sufficient care had not been taken of the elder sister. In this light also, the baroness pretended to view the matter. Sincerely wishing at all hazards to get rid of a niece, whose personal attractions much exceeded those of her own daughters, she used every endeavour to excite her husband's wrath against Baroness Völkersdorff, who, instead of feeling obliged by the hospitality shown towards her family, had chosen to add reproaches and in-

gratitude to the disgrace already brought on the house of Ferronay by Ludmilla's misconduct.

Consequently, preparations were made for sending Catherine back to Presburg, where she was met by her mother's confidential kammerpaw. With the exception of her kind uncle, there was no one at Ferrona from whom she regretted to part; on the contrary, she rejoiced at being freed from a society, which, from the first, had only caused to her embarrassment and anxiety, which was becoming daily more and more oppressive.

The summer had already passed, and autumnal tints were on the trees, when she arrived in the lonely and rocky ravine of Clamm Castle. There she found her mother greatly changed. The blow inflicted by Ludmilla's elopement had entirely destroyed the last remains of her cheerfulness and courage, under bereavement and misfortune; and the conduct of her present spiritual adviser seemed calculated to increase, rather than lessen, her inward gloom. All the happiness of this world, he insisted, should be destroyed, in order that the heart may be compelled to fix its affections on another. Mankind should have no dependence, but on that which is invisible and eternal. The ties of love, and even parental affection, all that inspires earthly hopes or fears, should be considered as obstacles in the way to salvation.

In consequence of his lectures, Baroness Völkersdorff was agitated by the most appalling apprehensions of having drawn on herself the wrath of Heaven, by suffering the destined "bride of the church," to desert the vocation assigned to her, and began to reflect that the only method of avert-

ing divine vengeance was by compelling Catherine to make the sacrifice which had been expected from her sister. In order to encourage and strengthen her in this plan, it is almost superfluous to say, that father Isidor used every argument which his ingenuity could devise; and it was not long after her arrival at Clamm Castle, ere Catherine ascertained that her future prospects were most painfully, as well as most unexpectedly changed. In vain did she weep and expostulate, in vain also did she declare the impossibility of acquiring the requisite dispositions for so serious an undertaking. Her arguments were of no avail against the terrors of the baroness, and the blind zeal of her holy confessor. The former declared that her own salvation, and the fate of the whole family depended on Catherine's submission to take the veil; while the monk, by arguments equally incomprehensible and erudite, maintained that a sacrifice made contrary to the dictates of nature, and impulses of the heart, was far more acceptable in the estimation of the Almighty, than if it were an act of unconstrained choice and volition. The spirit of the unhappy girl was worn out in this obstinate contest; she knew not where to turn for advice and consolation, and saw no means of ending the strife, but by submitting to arbitrary power, and resigning herself to her destiny.

Under these adverse circumstances, Catherine had neither leisure nor inclination to express her suspicions, with regard to the secret intercourse which probably had been kept up betwixt Ludmilla and the fascinating Zriny, whose image, though not so vividly as heretofore, still dwelt in her memory. It was

with great pain also; that she now reflected on the dying words of her indulgent and affectionate father, whose last moments had been soothed by the conviction, that she would become the wife of Sandor Szlatinski. Even the baroness seemed to hesitate when this was brought to her recollection. There were conflicting engagements, and both should be held sacred. However, father Isidor was clearly of opinion that an engagement made to the church, at the altar of the Virgin, was of paramount importance, to which every other duty must yield, and in her present state of mind she was too ready to receive the monk's advice as the words of an oracle. It was therefore intimated to Catherine, that nothing could alter her future destination in life, in regard to which the will of Heaven was clearly apparent; and father Isidor undertook to inform Sandor Szlatinski of the necessity to give up his intended bride, who, from henceforward, was betrothed to the church.

Willingly as the baroness, and at last Catherine herself, seemed to join in this plan, the young Polish cavalier, was by no means so pliant as was expected. On the contrary, having received the letter of father Isidor, he set out in furious haste for Clamm Castle, and arrived there in a mood of anger for which the baroness was unprepared, and at which she was exceedingly alarmed. Resolutely and calmly, however, he reminded her of the solemn promises and engagements made at the death-bed of the late baron, and insisted on the duties that must be fulfilled to the *deceased*, and his daughter. He declared, moreover, that he was willing to take Catherine for his wife, without dowry, and without

making any claim now or afterwards on the family estates; nay, her relations might, if they chose, cast her off as an alien, with whom they would hold no farther intercouse; but never would he agree to renounce his betrothed bride; to whom, in the eyes of God and man, he was already united; or suffer one to be rendered miserable for whose future welfare and happiness, he had solemnly sworn to provide.

Such language was not without its effect on the baroness. Szlatinski, she knew, might with truth plead that his rights were sacred, and she herself might be answerable to Heaven for refusing to fulfil the dying injunctions of a husband and father. Such conflicting duties produced an awkward dilemma, and it required the utmost exertions of the holy confessor's eloquence to quiet the storm thus raised. Nor was the monk himself tranquil on this occasion. The obstacles he had to encounter made his zeal the more fervent. His own honour was at stake, and he determined at all risks to secure a sacrifice to the church, which would otherwise be thrown away on the world. He had private interviews with all parties, and addressed each in a style best adapted to work on the passions. With the baroness, however, he had little trouble. She was, indeed, horror-struck by the idea that her lamented husband could not rest in his grave, if his dying injunctions were disobeyed; but the monk promised that numberless masses should be said for the weal and repose of his soul; and convinced her that the doubts and fears, the pain and agitation she now suffered, if borne with patience, would obtain her an everlasting reward.

But to lead Catherine, after the return of Szlatinski, was no easy task. With consummate art he reminded her of the severe trials, and complicated misfortunes to which her mother had been subjected; her old age and increasing maladies, under which it would be cruel to refuse whatever consolation could be afforded. He insisted that the mere conviction of having saved at least one daughter from the seductions of the world, and the snares of the devil, would ensure to the baroness happiness for the remainder of her life, and peace in the grave. These, as he well knew, were the only arguments which could effect his purpose, and at last they prevailed. He extorted from Catherine a promise, that she would no longer resist her mother's wishes and commands.

Of course, the most formidable task for the monk was his interview with Szlatinski, whose clear understanding was not to be blinded by sophistry; but here also he had concerted a plan. The monk had correspondents of his own fraternity in Presburg, as well as in almost every other town of consequence in Hungary and Austria, consequently, was well informed of what had taken place during the preceding winter at the house of Baron de Ferronay, especially of Zriny's attention to the sisters. This information he now turned to admirable good account, and contrived to make out a story of Catherine's meetings with the brilliant young chamberlain, of their constant intercourse, and the favour with which she received his addresses. A narrative so circumstantial and pointed, that it most effectually awoke the hitherto unknown torment of jealousy in the heart of his

victim. The moment he perceived that he had gained this advantage, the monk boldly followed it up with assertions, which *before* he would not for a moment have ventured to make, but which now passed without investigation or contradiction. Catherine's manners towards him had been colder than he expected, and she seemed almost resigned to the will of her mother; and this conduct, father Isidor represented as being, on her part, entirely voluntary, as, having been disappointed in the new object of her affections, she was on that account willing to sacrifice her youth to the cloister. However, on one point, Szlatinski remained inflexible. He was determined to have a final interview with Catherine, and judge by her own words, whether there was any ground for his jealousy.

Unfortunately, the monk's plan had been too skilfully laid. Catherine was already bound by the promises he had exacted from her, that she would offer no farther resistance to her mother's will. Szlatinski appeared before her in a mood, which alone was calculated to prevent any outward demonstration of the still existing affection she cherished towards him; and to his vehement questions, she replied with the most perfect frankness, that for a short time Count Zriny had paid her persevering attentions, and that she then felt some interest in his character and fate. After a stormy interview, Szlatinski considered himself bound to retire from the field, and to give up his rights. Alas! the young people were unconscious that each acted under a mistaken impression, which their confidence in the artful monk had produced; and during the short time which Szlatinski spent

at Clamm Castle, it was father Isidor's especial care to keep up the delusion, and prevent any possibility of explanation. At last Szlatinski spoke to the baroness. Without mentioning the true cause of his sudden determination, which he thought would have been a breach of faith towards Catherine, he intimated that he had given up all pretensions to her hand. Yet, at the same time, he endeavoured by every possible means to persuade the baroness against the plan of immuring her daughter in a convent; for though he could not have Catherine for a wife, he would nevertheless wish to protect her against that fate which must terminate in her lasting misery. As the reader may surmise, he completely failed in his good endeavours in this respect, and father Isidor was of course prepared to explain, after his own manner, the sudden change in Szlatinski's conduct, ascribing it to any motive rather than the true one,—his own sophistry and treachery!

The young Polish knight had departed; — but during the last days of his abode at the castle, there had been visible in his demeanour a deep melancholy. His cheeks were pale, his gestures were unsteady and constrained. Even the violent anger and injustice which he had shown towards Catherine, were additional proofs that in one part of her reckoning she had erred, and that she had greatly under-rated the amount of her kinsman's affection. By such thoughts she was alarmed, depressed, and mortified, and when, in the tranquillity of solitude, she had time to reflect, past and recent occurrences appeared to her mind in a far different light. She bitterly reproached herself for

inconsistency, vanity, and having yielded to the seductions of the world; till at last, the being obliged to assume the veil in her sister's place seemed but as the fitting punishment for her own evil conduct. In this mood she submitted, with humility and self-abasement, to the will of her mother, and found a melancholy satisfaction in retiring to her cell, where she would offer up prayer and penance, in behalf of those, whom she could never more meet in this world.

CHAPTER VII.

A YEAR had passed away, during which Catherine had remained in the deepest retirement. Both Szlatinski and Baron de Ferronay, had made extreme exertions, but no news were obtained of Ludmilla. The former no longer corresponded with the inhabitants of Clamm Castle, but made known to De Ferronay the result of his inquiries, which still remained unsuccessful. He himself, lived much in Warsaw, at the court of King John Sobieski, between which and his estates, he divided his time, endeavouring by application to public affairs, and the management of his property, to forget the impression of his own disappointments and sorrows. As for Count Zriny, he was still busily engaged, sometimes at Vienna, sometimes at Paris, or other places, being, as it was said, constantly entrusted by the emperor, on important diplomatic missions. Hearing this, Catherine was more than ever disquieted regarding the fate of her sister, being unable even to conjecture in how far it was joined to that of Zriny.

During this tedious year, there was no other subject of conversation at Clamm Castle, but the

question where to find a proper situation for Catherine, in her future conventual life; and after the several advantages of Vienna, Grätz, and Neustadt had been considered, the capital was resolved on. Thither, therefore, father Isidor was dispatched in order to arrange the requisite preliminaries, and after due deliberation the convent of "Heaven's Gate" was chosen for her future abode.

The spring of the next year, 1683, was fixed for her taking the veil, and father Isidor had secured for Catherine a temporary asylum in the house of Madame von Preysing, the highly respectable widow of a colonel in the Imperial service, whose house was at no great distance from the convent of Heaven's Gate. To Catherine, such arrangements were a matter of indifference. She had never yet been at Vienna, and cared not with whom she was to reside, only wishing that she should not enter into any order of which the discipline was lenient; for as it had been fixed that she should renounce the world, and do penance for her sin, the severer the rule was, of course it suited better for this purpose. In truth, she would have preferred one of those establishments of which the discipline is so strict, as not even to permit an interview with the nearest relative; but to this her mother's affection would by no means consent.

With unremitting assiduity, but with a heavy heart, Baroness Völkersdorf made the requisite preparations for her daughter's wardrobe in her new vocation. Through many a dull and mournful day in the month of September, when the weather was already tempestuous and broken, did the mother and daughter sit together as long as the day per-

mitted at their work-table, desirous to complete with their own hands whatever was requisite for the object in view.

But little conversation took place during this labour, for both were absorbed in their own mournful thoughts. The mother, who had already suffered so many deprivations, had no prospect, after her daughter's departure, but that of a life altogether joyless and lonely. As for Catherine, she was unwilling to leave the baroness; the new world into which she was to be introduced, after her first experience in Hungary, only excited apprehensions and distrust. Moreover, in spite of the alleged necessity for penance and mortification, she could not think of the conventual life without a degree of horror, which had much increased since Sandor Szlatinski's last visit to the castle. Indeed, she had, until that last interview with him, never known or suspected that she was loved, or witnessed the existence of that passion. The deep emotion, the noble firmness shown by Szlatinski at that meeting, had for the first time awoke in her mind an impression how inestimable was the affection of such a man; and no sooner were her eyes opened to this important truth, than she found herself obliged to relinquish for ever the happiness which she might have secured.

Thus absorbed in gloomy thoughts, the mother and daughter were one evening sitting together in the twilight of an autumnal day. "Put the work-frames aside," cried the baroness, "and bring me the spinning wheel, my eyes are painful already." Catherine obeyed in silence; but meanwhile, her mother had taken out a rosary, inlaid with mother-

of-pearl, the gift of a friend, who had brought it many years ago from a pilgrimage; and began to say her prayers, without wholly abstracting her attention from what passed around her. Catherine, meanwhile, sat herself in a corner, where she had no light but a faint gleam from some wood embers in the fire-place, and industriously plied her spinning wheel; while her thoughts wandered afar. How often had she when a child, played in this room with Sandor Szlatinski! how often had she heard her father speak of the dignity of his family, and relate anecdotes from the life of this or that general or archbishop, whose portraits, in their faded frames; and scarce recognisable in the twilight, now looked down on her from the walls. At those times how different was her situation! How different were now her future prospects, and what was become of her once destined husband? Perhaps the betrothed of some unknown beauty, — of a rich and beautiful Polander. This thought seized on her heart with freezing coldness; her tears dropped on the thread as she spun it, and wetted the work with their bitter dew.

"What ails thee, Catherine,—dost thou weep?" said her mother; she answered in the negative. But the baroness answered, "I know already how it is; thy heart cleaves to the world, and thou still thinkest of Zriny; but there must be an end of this."

Catherine made no answer. For awhile also her mother continued her orisons half aloud, letting the coral beads of the rosary slip through her fingers. Suddenly she began again, "What frightful weather! how the storm chases the clouds,

and bends the fir trees! Good heavens! and how it howls in the chimney! quite frightful!"

"An abominable night!" said Catherine.

"And yet," added her mother after a few minutes, "mark the bright rose yonder on the glimmering brand, on the hearth; we may expect a visitor who will arrive to-day."

"Alas! mother, of what consequence are such tokens? What visitor will come to us, above all, in such weather?"

"Wilt thou set thy judgment against mine?" replied her mother; "these tokens are sure and undoubted. This has been allowed by all reasonable people."

Catherine made no opposition. To her, indeed, it was a matter of indifference, whether some one of their country neighbours, perhaps a forst-meister, or *dechaut*, or jugender land-junker, made his appearance for an evening visit.

On this, followed another interval of silence. The baroness had ended her devotions; the great oaken folding doors were opened, and a clear light fell into the chamber. Old Balthazar came tottering in, with lights in massive brass candlesticks, followed by father Isidor, who came according to established custom, to pass an hour in discourse and card play with the baroness before supper. Balthazar drew the old hazel-nut wood card-table with its folding leaves, before the arm-chair of the baroness, spread the leaves, laid the parti-coloured Tyrol-cloth over it, placed the lights, and wished the party a pleasant evening. Catherine brought cards and counters. Balthazar retired, and the baroness began the dialogue, by inquiring what

news father Isidor had heard from Vienna or Presburg.

"News I have heard, truly," answered the monk, "but nothing good. The Turks were zealously continuing their preparations for war, and the Hungarian malcontents do all they can to assist them. Count Tökely has collected a considerable army, and as my correspondents announce, almost the whole of Upper Hungary is on his side of the question."

"Good God!" sighed the Baroness Völkersdorff, "what will become of poor Hungary?"

"A Turkish province, if the present course of affairs should continue," answered father Isidor.

"Just Heaven!" exclaimed the lady, "my unfortunate country, a Turkish province! Christianity extirpated, the churches overthrown, the people massacred!"

"Say not so, noble lady," interrupted the chaplain. "Those times exist no longer, and you may be well assured, that Count Tökely and his confidants, will take good care to protect their own and friends' properties, lives, and religion. Besides, one must not suppose that the present proceedings of the Turkish Court, in conjunction with the Hungarian malcontents, are to end in a destructive inroad of barbarians, such as formerly devastated Hungary; or in the outrages of an army exasperated by resistance and bloodshed. The Sublime Porte is in our times to be looked on as one of the European powers just as France or Austria; understands his advantages just as well as they do, and would much rather rule over a lucrative Christian province, than a depopulated waste."

"But," said the baroness, "the malcontents are themselves no Christians, if they would give us up into the power of the Turks."

"They are Christians by name, truly," said father Isidor with a sigh: "Christians they are denominated; but God help us, what sort of Christians! backsliders, renegades, that are even worse than pagans!"

"There, you have yourself said it, father," answered the baroness; "and what have we then to expect from them?"

"Nothing good, as I have already said," replied the monk; "but it is rumoured that Tökely has made an agreement with the Sublime Porte, that for a yearly tribute of forty thousand dollars, Hungary is to be protected by the Turks."

"Good God! protected by the infidels!"

"Then farther, in entering into this engagement with them, it is rumoured that he has made especial demands for himself and his friends. It is said also, but this too is without confirmation, that feeling himself too weak to meet the Austrian powers, he tries constantly, by his agents in Constantinople, to irritate the Grand Seignior into breaking the truce, and surrounding Hungary with hostile troops."

"Heaven protect us! another Turkish war," groaned the baroness; "and the Turks are already in arms, you say?"

"That may be considered certain, especially in the frontier provinces."

"So then all misfortunes combine in our devoted country; pestilence, war, devastation and bloodshed!" cried the baroness, wringing her hands.

"Nay, nay, worshipful lady; the war has not yet commenced, and we shall trust in God. It is earnestly to be deplored, however, that his majesty our king should not be better surrounded."

"How so?" said the baroness: "what do you mean?"

"There are people about the emperor, men of whom it is inconceivable how they arrived at the situations which they now hold. There is, for example, the young Count Zriny."

"Zriny? the name is not quite unknown to me?"

"It is the same of whom, in all probability, you have heard from Mademoiselle Catherine."

This was uttered with a side glance at Catherine, which the baroness never noticed, but went on with her discourse.

"Ay, ay, I know, my brother mentioned him sometimes in his letters. But what has he to do with the emperor?"

"What!—as report says, he is the emperor's favourite, and the brother in law of Tökely, and a son of the man, who, as a rebel, fell by the hand of the executioner at Neustadt. Do you now understand the matter, lady? This man is ambitious, even a crown does not appear too high for his aspirings, and he possesses the emperor's confidence. He has a number of secret connections; he is now at Vienna, now at Paris, now at Munich; corresponds with Turkish Agas; in short, he has his hands every where in the game, and I am much deceived, if he has not serious plots of treason in agitation!"

"And how do you know all this, reverend sir?" said Catherine, who now for the first time mingled in the conversation.

"Much, to tell the truth, I have learned from very good sources, which frankly, *I cannot name.* Besides, when one has lived a certain time in the world, experience teaches us to judge of what will happen, by what has already happened."

"That would, in the present instance, be rather an unamiable judgment," said Catherine, "to decide thus against a man whom you have never seen, and who has never injured you."

"And wherefore?", said the chaplain; "Oh! my good lady, experience and knowledge of mankind are no such deceitful guides as you here suppose; and that I do not know him personally, signifies little. How many a man, and woman too, have known him, and been wretchedly deceived."

Catherine was silent:—these last words had wounded her deeply. However, she could by no means join in father Isidor's views, nor accuse a man of treason, whom, in spite of all that had happened, still stood very high in her estimation.

"As I know him not," continued the priest, "my judgment of him is the less likely to be prejudiced; I am neither dazzled by his exterior, nor blinded by his flattery. For both these he is famed, and is said to have in his manners acquired such power, that the emperor blindly trusts to him. Besides, it is not for nothing that he has been at the court of Louis XIV. It is probable, nay, almost certain, that the plans he now wishes to carry into effect along with his brother in Hungary, have been framed in Paris. It is known what are the sentiments of the French court, and that it privately supplies the malcontents with men and money."

"And Zriny condescends to be an agent in this traffic?" said the baroness.

"Of course, it is for his own advantage, and that of his family: probably we shall soon hear more, unless, by some fortunate chance, the emperor's eyes are opened, and the traitor receives his merited punishment."

At these words, Catherine left the room. This dialogue had too painfully awakened her old remembrances, and all the sufferings which Zriny had brought on her, awoke vividly to her mind. Her mother took no notice of this, but the monk shook his head, in silence. At last, he broke off the conversation, and they betook themselves to the card-table, playing very zealously at piquet, until the hour struck for supper, at which time Catherine again appeared. Her eyes showed that, during her absence, she had wept. Their meal was taken in almost utter silence, and each retired directly to their several apartments.

Catherine, however, did not go to bed; she stood long at the window, looking down into the deep precipitous ravine, on the rocks and fir-tree woods. The whole adventures of her past life, recalled by the monk's conversation, came vividly to her mind. She could not help acknowledging to herself, that, in many respects, he had judged of Zriny rightly. She felt painfully how unfortunate to herself and her sister had been the consequence of an acquaintance with him; especially what injustice she had, on this man's account, done to her faithful lover, Sandor Szlatinski.

His last visit, — the love which could not be misunderstood, and was expressed even by his vio-

lence; the gloomy aspect with which he had long surveyed her, and the gloomy resolve, too, with which he had quitted her; all came to her remembrance. Now a year had passed away since she saw him last, and it was more than likely that she would never again see him. "Never, never more!" cried she, and wringing her hands, held them up to the mournful midnight sky. "Alas!" added she; "what would I not give for an opportunity to see him once more; how deeply I now feel the injustice I have done to him, and how grateful I feel for his affection." At that moment, it seemed to her as if she heard the sound of horses' hoofs coming up the valley. She listened; there could be no mistake, and there were two horses. Now they came nearer; now came up the steep road that led to the castle. Who could it be, that at so late an hour, visited their lonely habitation? Now the riders had come up, and galloped across the bridge; to all appearance a master and servant. In spite of the mantles which they wore, and the darkness, she thought she distinguished the Hungarian uniform, and,—good heavens! also the figure and voice of Sandor Szlatinski. The servant dismounted, and knocked at the gate; the porter opened the small narrow door, went out, and soon recognized the friend of the family. Catherine could no longer have any doubt it was Sandor, and much, at the first moment, as she was delighted with the idea of seeing him again, she could not help reflecting, with a heavy heart, that after what had passed betwixt them, his appearance at Clamm Castle could not betoken any good. Meanwhile the large gate was opened. The horses' hoofs

sounded under the high archway, and soon after upon the causeway of the court. Catherine was uncertain whether she ought to leave her chamber, and meet the ci-devant lover, who had parted from her in anger.

Willingly, oh! how willingly, would she have done so, and said to him how highly she respected his character, how much she regretted having offended him, and that in the convent her prayer and penance would be offered up in his behalf. But she did not venture this, for she was afraid of offending him still more, and she would rather refuse herself gratification, than cause pain to the friend who, for her sake, had already suffered so much. However, she could not deny herself the solace of going into the next room, where the windows directly looked over the court. Here lights were brought out, and servants were in attendance, who, with respectful affection, greeted the well known lover of their lady. Szlatinski dismounted, kindly returned their salutations, and followed old Balthazar, who, with a lamp, led him up the narrow winding stairs into his old accustomed apartment. The windows of this room looked into the court, and were directly opposite to those at which Catherine, concealed by the darkness, could observe every movement of the newly arrived guest. She saw him pace to and fro in his apartment, as if in great agitation; stopping now and then, as if lost in thought; then walk rapidly as before. At last Balthazar came, bringing him wine and refreshments, of which she observed that he took very little, and Balthazar soon retired. No sooner was Sandor left alone than he renewed his walk. Some tor-

menting thought seemed to prey on him; and she would have given much if she had been able to guess whether he thought of her; and on what account he had come at so late an hour, and in such rough weather. After a while she saw him kneel before the crucifix, clasp his hands, and say his evening prayers.. Quickly also she threw herself down, lifted up her arms in prayer to the universal Father, and a long unknown quiet was diffused over her heart, at the idea that her own prayers, and those of the faithful companion of her youth, would at that moment rise as a joint offering to Heaven. Now Sandor arose, making the sign of the cross on his breast and forehead. His servant came in to assist him in undressing. Catherine threw him an invisible kiss, and then blushing and half looking round, lest any one had seen her, retired. A soft slumber, such as she had long wished for in vain, stole over her senses, and pleasant images of the past and the future played on her fancy.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the following day, Sandor was immediately introduced to his aunt, who had been informed of his arrival. The greeting was cordial and affectionate on both sides, and Sandor explained the object of his visit. Chance had led him unexpectedly to an explanation of Ludmilla's abduction, and her present situation. As soon as his business at the court of Warsaw permitted, he had hastened to his uncle, Baron Ferronay, in order to announce the news to him, and to ask his advice, which was, to consult with Baroness Völkersdorff before any farther steps were taken.

Szlatinski now related that at the court of Sobieski, in the train of the French ambassador, he had met with a certain Count Bethune, an officer also of that nation, who appeared to have many acquaintances in Hungary. He had lived sometime alternately with Tökely in Muncats, and with the Bassa of Ofen, who, it was said, was a renegade, and native of Switzerland. In all probability this Count Bethune was a secret emissary of the French court, who, with a view of inciting Sobieski against Austria, and winning him over to

the views of Tökely, now resided in Warsaw. He was a talented man, who showed in his conversation much wit and vivacity, and conversed on the many countries and lands which he had visited, in a manner both instructive and amusing.

Once the conversation happened to turn on travelling adventures; and the Frenchman related, that a long while ago, he had arrived at an inn on the road to Ofen, which was a wretched place, and scarcely afforded even a tolerable shelter. Not long after him, there arrived two young Turks on horseback; of whom, the eldest was about twenty, the younger not more than eighteen years old; and they were attended by some Tartars also on horseback. Count Bethune stood at the window, and was struck by the care with which the elder brother lifted the younger from his horse, and led him into the house. Soon after, he overheard in the next room, a dialogue, carried on very earnestly, but in a low tone, and supposing it came from the young Turks, was not disposed to take any farther notice. Soon afterwards it seemed to him that the language in which they spoke, did not sound like Turkish; nay, it seemed as if here and there he heard French words. His curiosity awoke, and he approached the door which separated the rooms. It was so badly constructed that he easily found in it a rent, through which he could see into the adjoining room, "Think, gentlemen, of my astonishment," continued the count, "when I saw the younger Turk without turban or caftan, having laid both aside on account of the heat, sitting right opposite to me.—I could have betted all I am worth in the world, that instead of a Mussul-

man, I beheld a most beautiful girl! with regular features, and an aspect of deeply interesting melancholy; never shall I forget the expression with which she lifted up her large dark eyes to her companion, who sat in such a position that I could not rightly see him. He spoke softly, but with so much fervour, that I distinctly ascertained his words to be French, although I could not make out the drift of his discourse. When he ended, the beautiful girl raised her plaintive voice, and if I had any doubts left about her sex, these were now completely removed. She seemed endeavouring to sooth him, and as if defending herself against jealous suspicions. The youth answered rather angrily, and she looked at him with an expression which only the most perfect innocence and innate consciousness of virtue, could assume for a moment. Now she rose up, and with her hands clasped, moved towards him. I wished to follow her with my eye, and as I leaned against the door, the crazy old fabric gave a great crack. The terrified couple started away from each other,—looked round with horror and suspicion, and spoke no more. Soon afterwards I heard their door open. I feared that this interesting neighbour had already taken flight. It was, however, only the elder brother, who, upon my opening my door, shot rapidly past, and at the same time cast on me a look of great rage. Now I saw him completely. He was also a very handsome youth, of a noble presence; but that he also was no Mussulman, became obvious to me from the first moment. Not long afterwards the Tartars' came up: the whole chamber adjoining mine, with the door-locks, was

examined; the lock bolted, and the door covered with cloth, which effectually prevented any farther espionage on my part. All this was very provoking, but they could not, in like manner, deprive me of the power of listening.

"After some time, I heard a whispering, which at the beginning was violent, but became always softer and milder; often also was it broken by female tears and sighs; also by kisses, which I heard unequivocally. The jealous youth would doubtless have gladly excluded me from all possibility of making such remarks, if it had been in his power; but the miserable ale-house afforded him no other apartment, and he was under the necessity of having his charge close to me.

"When night approached, the young man left the apartment, and a Tartar was placed as a guard before the door; a delicacy of proceeding, which, while it threw a still more mysterious interest over the affair, could not but extort my praise. In the morning I arose early, determined to see the concealed fair one as she quitted the spot; and being joined by her companions, her door opened; she issued forth, when seizing the moment, I too stept forth, and they were compelled to pass close by me. The young man, however, placed himself so as to conceal his lovely charge as much as possible from my view; but I caught enough of his features, to recognize them easily at any distance of time. Now it so happened, that about six months subsequently, I was staying with Count Tökely at Munkats. Think of my surprise, when, in the brother of his countess, the youthful Zriny, I at once recognized the handsome Turk. I per-

ceived also, from a movement of surprise, and the angry look with which he met me, that he was equally conscious of having seen me before.

"I was now," continued my informant, "more eager than ever to learn who the fair girl was, and where she was then residing. But spite of my earnest inquiries, I could elicit nothing at Munkats, beyond the belief, that this was far from being the young count's first adventure; and that he had, very recently, carried off a nun from her convent at Elsatz, in Hungary. On his own part, he received every advance I made towards a nearer acquaintance, with a haughty repulsion I could ill brook. I threw out broader hints of what I knew; he fired up,—swords were drawn; he was wounded, and prudence counselled me to withdraw promptly from a place where the bold Tökely's arm could reach farther than mere respect for the emperor."

Szlatinski ceased; and the bereaved mother, instead of deriving consolation from any part of his narrative, only gave vent to renewed lamentations. It was in vain he sought to inspire her with hope; and when he alluded to the happiness she still enjoyed in a daughter like Catherine, she repeated her former declaration, that it had been determined upon between father Isidor and herself, as Ludmilla had broken her vows to Heaven, her lovely sister should be substituted in her place. "Do not attempt," she added, "to shake our determination; for, so far from changing it, I can assure you, dearest nephew, that nothing would rejoice us so much as to hear, that you had endowed our good church and convents with your fortune; and had yourself become ——"

"I become a priest!" exclaimed Sandor, unable to restrain his indignation at the idea—"I be guilty of deserting the world, to hide myself in cowl and hood! Do you think me—"

"Oh, stop!" cried the alarmed devotee; "utter no expression of impiety in my ears. You are infected with heresy; you have imbibed the poison of that wicked sect—go, go away! and leave poor Catherine to the care of father Isidor and me."

"Yes, I will go," was the reply; "for I perceive that it would be fruitless to attempt to remove prejudices so deeply seated; and if Catherine is to be the victim, you shall never behold me more."

A long and earnest conversation now ensued; till, finding every appeal of justice and reason alike in vain, he took a cool, but dutiful leave of the superstitious lady, and proceeded eagerly in quest of his fair cousin. He found her in her flower garden, which commanded a view of the road by which he had to pass; a deep blush suffused her countenance as they met; both stood for some moments without uttering a word; till at length, raising her timid eyes to his, and then pointing to the two horses which stood ready saddled at the hall-door,—she burst into tears. She would have hastened to the castle; but the now delighted lover, gently drawing her into one of her own sweet, secluded bowers, threw himself at her feet, and with protestations of the most ardent attachment, sought to reassure, and convince her of his unalterable fidelity and truth.

"You do not hate me, then," sobbed out the agitated girl, as she leaned her head upon his shoulder, and mingled her tears with his;—"you do not hate me, as I have been told!" she gasped out, as she felt herself clasped closely, and more closely to his bosom. It was a moment of the most delicious sympathy and joy; every cloud of suspicion vanished from the heaven of their love; and its exstacy was the more intense, from its contrast with the anxiety and wretchedness they had before suffered. Scarcely could either believe the reality of each other's presence; and for some time they stood entranced with the conscious bliss of unbroken faith, and yet unsevered love. Sweet smiles, and heart-sweet sighs, soon succeeded to sobs and tears; they read in each other's joy-lit features, the fullest assurances of their future truth, and forgot in the enchantment of the moment, that there existed such authorities as monks, or mothers, capable of hurling them from the summit of all their hopes and joys. The idea first flashed across the young soldier's mind; his arms fell from their clasp; his eyes and brow became again clouded, and he no longer hung in exstacy upon every word and look. "What madness is this!" he cried; "why indulge this wild delicious dream! Sentence has been pronounced upon our love; and I am but come to bid you an eternal farewell." He turned away; her tears now fell faster, and more bitterly.

"Yes! I know it, I know it all," she exclaimed, as she wrung her hands; "they will have it so; but may God for ever bless, and make you happy, dearest cousin,—and when shrouded from the world, I shall still devote my life to one object, and weary

Heaven with prayers for my only beloved and lost;" but tears and sobs again choked her voice.

The young soldier's feelings were almost equally overpowered; he forgot the more cold and resolute conduct he had prescribed for himself, and with passionate exclamations, seizing the weeping girl in his arms, he overwhelmed her with caresses, and imprinted burning kisses upon her lips: "No, no!" he cried, "we will not submit; no power on earth shall separate us!" And renewing his more impetuous caresses, he pressed her with increasing ardour, till she wholly lost the power of either appealing to him, or resisting his passion. As little had she dreamed of its existence in so intense a degree; sensations wholly new and inexplicable deprived her of utterance, and it was not till taking alarm at his ungoverned fervour, she released herself by a sudden and last effort from his embrace.

"What is this!" she exclaimed; "what madness possesses you! Indeed you terrify me! I dare not become yours—would *you* drive me to a cloister—wild and desperate, as you are, I dare not trust you?"

"A cloister!" repeated Sandor, recoiling as he spoke! "there it is;—that drives me to madness. I see too plainly that you even wish to obey your mother."

"Oh heavens!" replied the artless girl; "how little you know my heart, dear Sandor. Did you know the ceaseless tears I shed on your account, you would not do me this injustice!"

"What; you do not really wish it!" replied Szlatinski, his eye lightening up,—"then are you, indeed, the noble girl I ever thought you."

"No, believe me," continued Catherine, "I resisted the intentions of father Isidor and my mother from the first. The monk insisted that both my own and my mother's eternal welfare depended upon our decision, for that God would hold us responsible for the impious desertion of Ludmilla's vows. What could I do? — how resist the repeated appeals made to my best feelings? Alas! I thought it my duty to submit; but am I happy? do I not turn with dread from the bare idea?"

"My sweet cousin! my angel — love!" replied the soldier. "I own my fault. I have indeed been unjust — cruel—but all is not yet lost; only speak —will you be mine?"

An expression of joy lighted up her features for a moment, and as quickly vanished. "Oh, dear Sandor! you know my heart — but it is not impossible; can we, dare we even talk?"

"At this time, I admit, we cannot; but strange events are at hand, — only let us pledge our mutual vows, and trust to the future! Tell me the period fixed upon for your professing."

"That I know not," was Catherine's reply; "but next spring I am to take the veil—at least I enter the cloister, and begin my noviciate; but a year will elapse ere——"

"Then!" exclaimed Sandor, in a tone of triumph, "there is hope for us both. What changes may not the next half year produce! Look only on the past; even misfortune, however trying or terrible, may boldly calculate upon the future, and why, dearest, need we to despair? We have a friend in your uncle Ferronay; there are few such men; and I have not a doubt of our ultimate hap-

piness, if you will pledge me, heart and hand, in sweet and solemn words, that you will, when time favours us, become my wife."

"Oh, yes! I do—I will—with my whole heart—and hand — and lips!" was the confused, half-breathless reply; as the happy lover seized the proffered hand, and sealed the compact with a holy kiss.

"I consider that you are now my own; wedded in heart and mind — before the altar of pure faith, — in the sight of Heaven, and that you cannot — dare not break your vows, and accept the veil."

"And I would wish, dear Sandor, that it may not ever be brought to the test; and indeed you make me very happy to feel that actual compulsion alone can disunite our loves."

"But not a word, sweet cousin, of our wedded hearts, and heaven-pledged vows, either to the stern chaplain or your poor mother," continued the young soldier, as he folded her gently in his arms—gazed upon her features with an expression of mingled pride and sorrow, — and then pressing his lips to hers in one long last adieu, tore himself from her arms, and rushed from the spot. As eagerly did he mount his charger, ready at the door; and setting off at full speed, as if doubting his firmness, scarcely ventured to gaze back upon the beloved object he had left, who stood with glistening eye and folded hands following him with prayers and blessings so long as she could catch a glimpse of his person.

From this time forth, there was a marked change in Catherine's character and feelings; — there was less vivacity—less of the mere girl, but more of the

thoughtfulness, the dignity and grace of woman. She exhibited also a prudence, and caution in all her words and actions, and a truer estimate of the real worth of things, than she had before evinced; her mind seemed to keep pace with the development of her person; she examined the circumstances by which she was surrounded; extended her intellectual vision through the whole circle of her duties, and felt at once her naturally excellent understanding strengthened, and her spirits invigorated by spontaneous cultivation of the talents and accomplishments which she possessed. It was then she perceived the truth of her lover's remark, that there was nothing in her situation to lead them to despair; that her destiny was not necessarily decided, and that by the double advantage of gaining time and the exertion of skill, and courage, a wholly new and more delightful aspect, might be given to the future. Though her affection for her cousin, Sandor, was not of a passionate or romantic character, it was deeply rooted in early habits and associations; and the recent energy and impetuosity of passion, of which she had not believed him capable, while it agitated every fibre of her sensitive frame, had rendered him inexpressibly dear to her. She felt bound to him by a thousand new and delicious ties; by feelings of which she had never even dreamed; and with which those of mere imagination, excited for a moment by Count Zriny, could bear no sort of comparison. It was now for the first time she felt that she was really in love; it charmed while it elevated all her thoughts; it threw fresh lustre over her charms, and that beauty of mingled mind and form, which may be seen to animate those

who truly love in the most mixed society, but which is in itself indescribable.

With features more frank and free, but closer thoughts and bolder spirit, Catherine rejoined her mother, and even met the dark penetrating glance of father Isidor, with more equanimity than usual. The prevailing topic was introduced; not a few cutting remarks were made, upon the presumed principles and sentiments of their recent guest, which the ardent girl repelled with more than her usual vivacity and to the air of indifference, with which she listened to the strictures upon herself, was indebted for much briefer discipline than she would have received, had she indulged the father confessor with the sight of beauty in tears of distress. The superstitious old lady was not a little puzzled, and far from being aware of the recent interview, and the new light which had broken upon her daughter's mind and prospects, she naturally attributed the change to a want of fervour in the sacred career to which she had been called. A singular scene ensued, from which Catherine retired more than half triumphant, and more decided in her hostility to a cloistered life; leaving her spiritual advisers not a little mortified and surprised, at her strange behaviour.

Weeks and months elapsed, but no further accounts of the fair deserter reached her anxious and perplexed friends. The winds of autumn had begun to strip vale and forest of their summer beauty; storm and flood came gathering from the mountain-sides, and thicker mists gradually spread over the land. The first snow-tufts became visible upon the peaks of the neighbouring cliffs; and the

still, unbroken life, of the ill-assorted dwellers of Clamm Castle, grew every day more dull and uniform, from the aspect of the world without. Fewer, and fewer, were the parties of travellers passing over the adjacent mountains, or exploring the scenery of the country around; the fears of the lady of the castle, assumed a deeper superstitious hue; the chaplain had recourse to his uniformly Job-like, and dubious style of consolation, and his most inspiring pictures of a better world still partook, spite of his words and looks, far more of the dark and stern, than the consoling, as he accompanied the daughter to the couch of her feeble, but now happy parent.

What would she not now have given, if her cousin Sandor, had been present at this moment, to whom she might have disclosed her painful situation, and asked counsel from his prudence! But he was at a distance, and no hope appeared of soon seeing the friend, who was becoming from reflection and attachment, every day dearer to her. She had therefore no resource, but to decide for herself. She considered, and reconsidered, and embraced at last the resolution, not immediately to mention all that she had recently heard of the affair of her sister, to her mother; because in this case, she must certainly show the letter, and so all would be revealed to father Isidor, for whose perusal a secret voice told her, many parts were not adapted. She therefore wrote to her uncle Ferronay, with exact copies of Ludmilla's letters, and begged him, after having disclosed all the circumstances to him, to write to her mother, informing her of as much as he deemed necessary or useful, and as if the in-

telligence had first reached him, in an authentic shape. In this manner, Catherine thought she should best consult her mother's feelings, to whom every intelligence respecting her lost child must appear as a messenger from heaven, as well as the dictates of prudence, and a concern for her sister's circumstances, which seemed to Catherine to be in a very complicated state.

The uncle's answer arrived very speedily. He praised Catherine's prudent conduct, and inclosed a letter for her mother, containing what was necessary for her to know. This she immediately took to her mother, concluding what she had so prudently begun, and quickly departed, avoiding thereby the painful part, which the communication of the contents of the letter would have compelled her to act. Immediately after, she heard father Isidor called, the meaning of which she divined, and congratulated herself on her not having communicated the letter to him. At length, she also was called, and made acquainted, in few words, with what it was deemed fit to communicate to her of the whole, namely, that her sister had been found at last, and was still alive, although far distant, in Paris, and that she was married to a Hungarian nobleman of great distinction, with whom she had formerly become acquainted at Presburg, a chamberlain to the emperor, and a great favourite at court,—Count Zriny, who had carried her away; but that this marriage, from secret and urgent family considerations, must be kept secret; on which point, it was impressed on Catherine, to observe the utmost silence. The good lady herself knew not much more of the story; for Ferronay,

had selected, and represented the whole in such a skilful and prudent manner, that it wore a very trust-worthy appearance in the eyes of one so little able as his sister to subject matters to a stricter scrutiny. On her, however, the news made a decidedly good impression. The history of the Prodigal Son was now repeated, and the long-grieved mother forgot the undutiful conduct of the recovered child, and dwelt only on the thought that she who had been dead, now lived again. The mind, that had been so long overwhelmed, regained its elasticity under so delightful a feeling, and even father Isidor's powerful warnings, that the recovery of the disobedient should excite no such feelings; that divine justice would never cease to punish the apostate; and he who had compelled the heavenly bridegroom to break her vows of truth, sooner or later, would have to make heavy atonement for his crime; yea, that such extravagant joy at the recovery, was a species of participation in the guilt, and consequently sinful. All this, at least, during the first few days, made no impression on the happy mother's heart. By degrees, however, when the first excess of joy was subdued, and a calmer consideration of circumstances took place, light clouds began to dim the horizon, that had been so suddenly illuminated, and father Isidor's views found a more ready hearing. The guilt of the run-away began again to deepen in the eyes of the anguished mother; the fear of the divine vengeance, on the account of such a sin, became stronger in her heart from day to day, and so it was immediately determined to offer what reparation was in her power for such heavy guilt, and to

present Leah for Rachel to the angry heavens. At this time also, the connection between her children appeared, by chance, to the prejudiced mind of the mother; father Isidor very willingly seconded a determination, the origin of which was partly his own; and Catherine was informed to hold herself ready to set off for Vienna before All Saints' day, and to prepare herself, as soon as possible, to enter on her holy vocation.

This intelligence was not entirely unexpected by Catherine; she had seen something like it approaching, for some days, and was no stranger to the thoughts awakened by it. The hope and courage of Sandor were shared by her. She considered an affair not quite hopeless, between the accomplishment of which and the present moment, there were yet eighteen months to pass, and accordingly, this haste was not disagreeable—for it brought her so much earlier in connection with people who were entire strangers to her. She pictured to herself, however, the grandeur and magnificence of the imperial city, so rich in all that was novel and unknown; for the inhabitants of the mountains depicted it to themselves in almost romantic colours, and to the youthful imagination of Catherine, it appeared as a perfect paradise of delight.

The preparations for the journey were soon made. A young girl, and Margaret, an elderly female of the establishment, were appointed to wait on Catherine during the journey, accompanied by father Isidor, as the guide and protector of the whole; who, as soon as he had committed Catherine to the care of the Lady of Preysing, was to return to Clamm with old Margaret.

The day of departure now began to draw near, and the good mother felt more uncomfortable at giving up this her last, and only child. Her hours of solitude often witnessed her bitter tears, which she carefully concealed from Catherine and father Isidor; even prayer gave her deeply-troubled feelings but feeble relief. Catherine, also, became more and more depressed, while the tender affection of her mother, who dared not express her feelings by words, and whose former coldness was now changed into an opposite feeling of warmth and attachment — made the thoughts of separation so much the more painful. At such moments her tears fell unconcealed, and to her troubled and desponding fancy, the future then appeared all overcast, and she could not, as at other times, indulge the pleasing hopes which Sandor had raised within her: on him, even, she thought with feelings of anguish, and often abandoned every hope of again seeing so dear a friend on earth.

At length, one morning, the old tumble-down coach, after many necessary repairs, stood ready for departure in the court-yard, with the son of the steward seated as postillion, in his best attire; for he was to have the honour of driving his young lady to Neustadt, where a change of horses awaited them.

The baroness and her daughter had passed the night in weeping, and had in vain courted repose. The first rays of the sun now gilded the summits of the opposite mountains, when Catherine's attendant entered her mistress's apartment, who, summoning up all her resolution, and dressing herself, went to take leave of her mother. The doubtful light of day scarcely illumined the gloomy corridor;

the cold was severe, and light glimmered in the court-yard about the coach that was now getting ready. The coachman smacked his whip, and Catherine shuddered at the sound. She approached the window, and saw the heavy machine which was to convey her away, with its large imperial, still bearing some remains of faded gilding. It was the same window, where, a few weeks before, she had sat with Sandor, where she had wept on his bosom, and where their hearts had understood and become attached to each other for life. The recollection overpowered her; she fell on her knees, and, with her head leaning on the window-shelf, wept profusely. Sabina, her attendant, endeavoured to calm her, which, having done with difficulty, she rose up. With her looks still turned towards the court-yard, she saw again the tree, the stair-case, the window of the room which Sandor had occupied, and bidding them adieu, recommended her absent friend and their mutual happiness to Heaven, and then went to bid a last farewell to her mother. She found her already dressed, and father Isidor with her, prepared for the journey. After many tears and blessings, and well nigh broken-hearted, the baroness tore herself away. Father Isidor, contrary to his custom, was compelled to console the afflicted pair, and to exhort them to bear their lot without murmuring, which produced a soothing effect, and Catherine and her companion parted for the carriage, which soon passed through the gate-way and over the drawbridge, and now slowly descended the steep mountain path.

It was now quite day when the travellers left the

narrow valley behind them; and when they entered the plain, the clouds were tinged with a golden light, the radiant sun had scattered the mist, and shed a new life over the lovely landscape. Such a spectacle was not without its influence on Catherine, who, with clasped hands, offered up her devotions to the Author of such a magnificent scene, and confidently confided her affairs to his wise keeping. Father Isidor took his breviary, and offered up his devotions in silence, while Margaret and Sabina slept. Catherine enjoyed the beauties of the picturesque scene around her, and gazed on the clouds that floated in strange shapes about the mountains, or the tortuous ascent of the smoke, that here issued from the pyramidical chimneys of the iron foundries by the road-side; and listened to the echo of the streams that impelled the machinery, and rebounded, foaming, from the wheels. The sooty figures of the forgemen, as they busily shifted about in the foundry, also amused her. The straightness of the road, however, made the distance appear greater between the successive villages on the route, as they were seen at such a distance; but father Isidor relieved the ennui of the scene, by interesting observations on the remarkable objects which they passed. On this evening the travellers reached Neustadt, and the father directed Catherine's attention to the temple gates, the towers, the bastions, the thick half-ruined walls, which formerly rendered the town a place of considerable strength, and whose inhabitants, having been always distinguished by their inviolable fidelity to their legitimate sovereign, had acquired for their city the title of *Ever Faithful.*

In former times it had received Frederick the War-like within its walls, and courageously maintained his freedom and person against the might of the emperor, Frederick II., who lay in the neighbouring city of Vienna. At a later period, the father mentioned how the valiant Baumkircher repelled the attack of the Hungarian troops on the bridge of Vienna, and protected the emperor, and the royal orphan Ladislaus, with his blood and life; and again, at another period, how the great Matthew Corvinus, King of Hungary, bestowed great praise and privileges on the inhabitants of Neustadt, who had valiantly opposed him and his army, and preserved their fealty for their native prince, and also presented them with a costly goblet, still shown in the town-hall, while the citizens of Vienna, who had received him too readily, and had not evinced the same zeal for their rightful sovereign, were severely punished.

CHAPTER IX.

Next day, the travellers continued their journey with fresh horses, and Thomas was sent back to Clamm with his cattle, and a thousand good wishes. Here, in the neighbourhood or Neustadt, Catherine still had the pleasure of seeing her native hills in the distance. A high range stretched itself along to the left, while the Schneeberg towered from behind, clad in its snowy garment. Seen from its summit, the plains below seem spread out like a boundless map before the eye. But now, as the travellers journeyed on, all this scenery became lost to them, except that to the left was a lower range of hills, amidst which, from time to time, were seen scattered villages, old castles, and modern buildings in agreeable variety; while, straight before them, and stretching away to the north and north-east, appeared an unbounded plain, on which were seen scattered single villages, embosomed in trees, like islands in the ocean. As they approached the capital, the townships on either side of the road be-

came more frequent; and Father Isidor pointed out to Catherine the names of each, as far as the eye could reach. He showed her, in a corner, between mountains, on whose brow rose proudly more than one ancient castle, — the little town of Baden, renowned in the time of the Romans, and since, for its mineral-waters; the old Mödling with its church, built in the time of the Templars, at the entrance of a rocky defile; the ruin of the castle of Babenburg, and further on, the fallen castle of the powerful Lichtenstein; and to the right, across the plain, the emperor's country-house, Saxenburg, surrounded by its gloomy meadows. The mountains on the left now began to appear, and the view, towards the north-west, to be shut out. Catherine thought she saw buildings on the two last mountains, and Father Isidor informed her she was not mistaken, and that they were named the Kahle and Leopold mountains, and at the same time the terminations of that vast mountain-chain which stretches from hence through Steyermark, Upper Austria, Salzburgh, Carinthia, to the Tyrol, and Switzerland. "That building," the father continued, "on the last mountain but one, is a convent of pious monks of Camaldoli, who observe the strict vow of eternal silence and reflection upon death; and there, on the very last elevation of the mountain, where stands a small church and a few houses, was situated, in ancient times, the castle of the then Margrave and Duke of Austria, of the house of Babenberg, the most celebrated of whom was the holy Leopold, the founder of the neighbouring monastery of Ktorternenburg, a truly pious

prince, and a pattern of unapproachable excellence to all his successors.

They were now rapidly approaching the capital, and had reached the heights which surround it, and the stone crucifix, which tradition reports to have been erected by the produce of a pious virgin's spinning-wheel. All of a sudden, Catherine uttered an exclamation of surprise, the great city having at once burst upon the view; although its magnitude was then not near so great as it is now. With its environs, and the beautiful villages in the neighbourhood, it seemed to occupy all the valley, which, extending in the shape of a graceful semicircle, was bordered on one side by the Danube, and on the other, by mountains. The river flowed majestically along, studded with numerous woody islets, united to each other, and to the opposite banks, by bridges. Catherine was surprised at the number of towers and steeples that rose above the city, and particularly admired St. Stephen's church, which, for beauty of structure, and the bold elevation of its spire, excelled all the others, and had not then been shaken by the Turkish artillery, so as to make it lean to one side, as it does at present. The dome was seen to rise above all the other palaces, not excepting that of the emperor; a true image, this, of the surpassing excellence and elevation of religion above all that is earthly.

The whole soul of Catherine was in her eyes, which could hardly embrace so many objects, at once so various, and so novel. As they now proceeded slowly up a slight ascent, the minuter part of the great picture became more clearly deve-

loped. Right before them, as father Isidor remarked, lay the emperor's country seat, Favorite; with its fine gardens, ornamented with fountains and immense basins, and situated on the highest point of the surrounding country. No trenches or ramparts then surrounded the suburbs with their vast works, which were raised twenty years later, as a protection against the irruptions of the Korutzen, in the troubles occasioned by *Ragotzy*.

Behind the gardens of this country seat, and onwards to the right, where now a mass of streets and buildings extend in labyrinthine mazes to the river, were, at this time, only a few houses and gardens to be seen, the ground being more taken up with vineyards, that clung to the sunny heights, and were the favourite resort of the emperor in the summer and autumn months. Instead of gardens laid out in the English style, which we now see, adorned with the choicest exotics, and evincing the improved taste of their owners, every comfortable citizen or person in an official situation, had then his vineyard and little box attached to it, embowered in trees, where he sought an asylum on the Sundays, during the hours of rest; and which yielded, in harvest, an excellent vintage, the produce of which was carried to the city for use. Our travellers now passed along the glacis, which were not then adorned with the fine rows of trees which now shade them. They arrived at length at the Carinthian gates, which led them into a narrow and dark street, between two rows of very high houses. The noise of carriages in the streets, the multitude of passers by, the number of brilliant equipages, the shops of every description,—all that she saw and

heard, rendered Catherine mute with astonishment. Father Isidor made no attempt to break the silence, and if he had, he would scarcely have been heard. At length, the carriage turned up a narrow street to the right, and arrived at a small open place between high walls, and a house, that had before it a strange assemblage of dark-looking stones in the form of a hillock, on which were placed the three crosses of Golgotha, the party-coloured statues of the blessed Virgin and St. John, the gate of a church, and the entrance to a convent, were now seen.

"There are the gates of Heaven," said father Isidor, "and this is the asylum which the mercy of Heaven offers to your inexperienced youth, as a refuge from the threatening tempests of time."

These words filled Catherine's excited and timid heart with anguish.

"Good Heavens!" she exclaimed, terrified: "and that building, with the imitation of the Hill of Calvary before it, — is it also a convent?" she inquired.

"No," replied father Isidor; "that is a prison, where criminals condemned to death are kept, from the time sentence is pronounced, till the moment of execution."

"Alas!" she thought within herself, "that the building, where I am to pass my life in severe captivity, should be so near another, of so horrible a description!" and thus agitated, she burst into tears. At this instant, the carriage stopped before a narrow and lofty house, with a Gothic roof, grated windows of unequal dimensions, and a small door, which opened into a long, narrow, and gloomy pas-

sage. This house belonged to the Baroness de Preysing, widow of a colonel in the Austrian service, who was killed in battle. This lady was a native of Spain, of very distinguished family, and became acquainted with the baron, when he came to Madrid in the suite of the imperial ambassador, the Count de Kerenhuller, to demand in marriage the Infanta of Spain, for his sovereign the Emperor Leopold. The fair Spaniard renounced her country, her family, and the brilliancy of fashionable life without regret, to unite her fate with that of the young Austrian. For more than thirty years, she accompanied him in his military career, and in his various campaigns. Of several children which they had had, only one daughter remained, who was also married to an Austrian, the General Count Dunerwald, who resided at Vienna, where Madame de Preysing had come to live, to be near her daughter. Being far advanced in years, she never went out, but to church. The Countess Dunerwald, being still young and beautiful, and of a lively and amiable temper, and her husband filling a distinguished post under government, went accordingly to court, and mixed in gay society, but visited her mother daily, whose solitude and ennui she relieved, by her accounts of what was passing in the world, and her liveliness. It was with this respectable lady, that Catherine was to reside, until she could enter the convent. Father Isidor descended from the carriage, and caused their arrival to be announced. Catherine's heart felt still more oppressed, with the thought, that she was going into the presence of people, with whom she was totally unacquainted, and with whom she was to

live. She would gladly have made her escape, and gone back to Clamm, but was compelled to follow her conductor, who was now on the stairs. Her apprehensions were already excited, by the mere entrance to this gloomy abode, which was only lighted by a lamp burning before a statue of the Virgin, of the natural size. The winding staircase, having no admittance to the day-light, but through a single, solitary, narrow window, that looked into a back court, deepened further her melancholy reflections, which carried her back to her own home at the castle, with its vast staircases and galleries, and the magnificent window from which she had seen Sandor arrive! Sighing deeply, she found herself suddenly at the door of the antichamber, where she was received by an old, starched, and grim-looking female, with a head-dress of muslin top-knot, in a brown gown, very worn, and stiff ruffles to the elbow, like winglets: — this was the first femme de chambre to the Baroness de Preysing. She conducted her new arrivals along a great passage, set round with large wooden presses. The door of an excellent kitchen was open, and displayed to view a superb assortment of gold and silver-looking dishes; which, however, resembled those metals only in their shining qualities. Another door led to the suite of rooms occupied by the baroness. The first had no carpet, and on the white plastered wall was hung round a collection of half-effaced family portraits, in black frames. The second room, was adorned with heavy-looking Flemish tapestry, and furnished with sofas, and high-backed elbow-chairs, covered with embroidery, strangely figured, which had been worked by the

lady herself, in her younger days. In each corner of the room a side-board of China lacker was placed.

Here the ascent was by a few steps to a large room, lit up by a single Gothic window, in two compartments, the view from which looked into the court. In a deep niche, a small and highly ornamental domestic altar, was placed; and opposite to this, an ancient wash-hand stand of silver, with a bowl-shaped urn. The appearance of the whole was that of a chapel: it was the sleeping apartment of the old baroness; and the air of neatness, comfort, and piety that was about it, would have made a favourable impression on Catherine, if her thoughts had not been otherwise engaged.

The mistress of the house, who now made her appearance, produced a painful effect at first sight. Her figure was small, and bent with years, but still retaining some marks of elegance, in spite of her years. She wore a long gown of black silk, with a train, a small cap of fine lace, adorned with bright coloured ribbons, and a silk handkerchief about her neck, falling down loosely over her dress. Her naturally elegant and delicate features had become sharpened by age; her hair, about her temples and forehead, was displayed in small well-arranged curls, and, with her numerous wrinkles, contrasted strikingly with a pair of brilliant black Spanish eyes, the lustre of which, time had not been able to extinguish, and which gave to her countenance a vivacity which distinguished her in all she did; although not unaccompanied with dignity. She addressed Catherine in French, who, not being well versed in that language, was so

overcome, that instead of replying, she burst into tears. The baroness was astonished, and looked at father Isidor; but a moment's reflection, and the experience of a long life, soon restored those feelings of indulgence, which are so natural for the embarrassment of a young country girl. She approached Catherine, and taking her hand in a friendly manner, addressed her in German, and with the kindness of a mother, endeavoured to soothe her. Father Isidor, also, rallied his young protégée on her weakness; and she soon felt how unsuitable was her conduct, and drying up her tears, begged to be excused, and that the baroness would have a little patience with her. Her simple and modest manners, the sweet expression of her beautiful countenance, and the sound of her voice, made a favourable impression on the old lady, who soon entered into familiar chat with Catherine, and the father; and thus brought into closer contact, two hearts formed to love each other.

During the first few days, many things occurred to surprise and annoy Catherine in her new abode; she even found the presence of Isidor a relief, amidst the new faces with which she was surrounded, and the old people whose serious visages frightened her. All the servants of the house were nearly as old as the lady herself, and had been with her many years, and were all as faithful, devoted, and obliging as possible. The baroness knew so well how to unite kindness and amenity of manners, with dignity, that she inspired, at once, affection and respect; and the heart of Catherine soon began to expand, under the influence of such genial feelings. At length, the daughter of the house,

Madame Julia Dunerwald, arrived, after an absence of some days, during which she had accompanied her husband on a hunting excursion. This young and beautiful lady, whose manners and dress bespoke a mind and character of the best ton, and of exquisite taste, threw herself upon her mother's neck, with marks of such warm affection, and evinced so much sense and sensibility, in the midst of almost infantine gaiety, that Catherine was delighted with her beyond measure; while her own filial affection, her naturally frank and amiable temper, and the reception she met with, irresistibly attached her to the charming baroness; and she soon felt herself perfectly at home in this stranger's family.

The mother and daughter, on their part, studied, also, the character of Catherine, whom they compared to a rough diamond, that only requires the artist's hand to bring forth its beauties. In their opinion, she could not fail to be esteemed, admired, and beloved for her many excellent qualities. But, in proportion as her character became known to her friends, they could not fail to perceive, that her wishes were far from being on the side of a conventual life, and that her yielding to it—which, in their opinion, ought to be from sincere conviction, and with full and free consent—was only an act of obedience to others, when all hope of escape had been abandoned, and overwhelming necessity compelled her. The baroness, therefore, was resolved on gaining Catherine's confidence, for the purpose of discovering whether this step was in consequence of father Isidor's persuasions; or only the result of weak and insufficient feelings of

her own;—for, in either case, she was resolved to do her utmost to induce her friend to abandon a resolution to which she must inevitably fall a victim. She spoke to her daughter on the subject, who was entirely of her mother's opinion; and they both agreed to spare no effort to gain Catherine's confidence still more, that she might open her heart to them, without reserve, which was not a matter of difficulty. Her breast harboured no concealment, and her tenderness of conscience made her disdain to dissemble, where, indeed, she had no occasion. A degree of timidity, and of prudence, however, still kept her back from making her protectors the confidants of all that had occurred up to the present time, as this would have naturally led her to allude to the history and situation of her sister, on which she wished to preserve a profound silence. Julia's account of the mode of life of the great world, its habits, and the pleasures of the court, made a great impression on her; for there was, in all she said, such spirit and vivacity, mingled with a candour that never imagined evil, and rarely indulged even in slight touches of wit and satire, that Catherine was enchanted. Madame Dunerwald possessed the talent of describing every one whom she had seen, with such truth of imitation, that on listening to her, one fancied to hear and see them, while she imparted to her descriptions a character so dramatic and so droll, as to excite Catherine's risibility, whose heart was no less attracted by a filial veneration for the mother, than were her mind and taste by the delight she experienced in the society of the daughter; and on these accounts, the frequent family parties were a

source of the most unmingled pleasure to all. Catherine was all eyes and ears to her friend's animated description of the balls, operas, and society of the court at Vienna, although this court was then much more rigorous in its adherence to etiquette, and far more solemn than in our times; and she laughed outright at the many pleasant anecdotes which Julia had such an art in telling; who was amused, in her turn, at seeing the interest Catherine took in them. The mother, however, did not approve of this, and hinted to her daughter, that it was scarcely prudent to describe that kind of society, and those amusements to a young person, whose future course of life was so uncertain, and who might, perhaps, be for ever debarred from them.

Madame de Dunerwald. was of a contrary opinion, and replied to her mother's remark, by saying, "that it was exactly because her fate was as yet undecided, and depended, in some degree, on her own wishes, that it was better she should know something of the world, to which, at the same time, she was not an entire stranger, as her stay with her uncle, De Ferronay, had given her, at least, an idea of it. She showed an aversion, however, to speak of it, and it is likely that the Hungarian manners did not please her, and this may possibly be the cause of her entering on a religious life. She must also see the society of Vienna, and may then choose, with some knowledge of the subject, and decide whether she will continue in her intention, or abandon it. I am quite anxious to introduce her to some agreeable family. She must keep aloof, I am aware, from all excess

in her attachment to fashionable life, and the splendour of the court; but it is absolutely necessary that she should mingle in society."

"But," replied the baroness, "if her aversion for a convent increases, and we should not be able to prevent her entering it, shall we not run the risk of rendering her more unhappy?"

"That is not likely," replied the daughter: "Catherine wants experience, but she is deficient neither in judgment nor prudence. Her good qualities are, at present, concealed by her timidity. Her mind will expand in society; her character will acquire more decision, and she will be better able to resist unjust encroachments."

"I know well, my dear daughter, that a knowledge of the human heart generally leads to the knowledge and examination of oneself, and that nothing can be more useful in every situation of life; we should, therefore, be much to blame in preventing Catherine from acquiring such a knowledge, but we ought to form her for such a scene, in the first place, and warn her of the importance of the course on which she is about to enter."

"And so much the more," replied Julia; "as I fear she has not escaped the influence of love: notwithstanding her openness, she is not very communicative on what relates to herself; for I have studied her closely, and I would venture to assert, that she has been in love, and, perhaps, still is so."

"This," replied the mother, "would be the more to be regretted."

"True; and we should be barbarians," replied Julia, "if, seeing the dangers that threaten her,

we should not employ every means to save her from them."

"My dear child," remarked the baroness, after musing for a moment; "let us not act rashly — whether Catherine has or has not been in love, she is, nevertheless, an amiable and charming woman, who only wants to have a somewhat better opinion of herself, and a more decided carriage — she interests me strongly, and I should deeply regret if her happiness were not equal to her worth. I wish, therefore —— "

"Permit me," replied Julia, hastily, "to introduce her to society, by taking her, for instance, to one of the balls of the carnival."

"What are you thinking about? — what would her family say ?— what would the court and the city say ?—to see me permitting a young lady, intended for a convent, and committed to my guardianship, going to a ball! No, no; most decidedly not. I have no objections to your introducing her to some respectable, quiet, families, and even to court, on some grand day, to enjoy the sight; but never to a public ball."

Catherine's entrance now interrupted the conversation, and she sat down to work at a large piece of tapestry, on which, according to the fashion of the times, many ladies were employed at the same time. A canopy was now in progress, and the subject was the judgment of Solomon, who was represented seated on a throne, loaded with ornaments in the Gothic style, and commanding the living child, which was in the arms of a ferocious-looking soldier, to be divided between the rival mothers. From the court of King Solo-

mon, Julia led the conversation to that of the deceased empress, to whom her mother had been maid of honour, and expressed her regret at not having known her.

"An Infanta of Spain; was she not?" inquired Catherine.

"Teresa Marguerita, my excellent mistress," was Madame Preysing's reply. "She was an angel,—and so young, even in the seventeenth year of her marriage,—and so early lost! I felt a presentiment on my arrival at Scholtvien, and when her rose-diamond too was lost."

"Oh! mamma, tell Catherine the story;—happening so near her native castle, it must be doubly interesting to her."

Madame de Preysing, loved to speak of old times, the anecdotes she had heard, and the scenes she had witnessed at the empress's court. She had been the princess's early companion; their union took place on the same day, and, in the midst of a luxurious court, the youthful beauty had preserved her reputation unblemished. How sweet, then, to recall those brilliant days with an unruffled heart! She needed no inviting, and commenced her narrative as follows:—"I was the sole lady of her suite allowed to attend the fair princess further than Roverdo, but being considered, myself, an Austrian, I rode in the same carriage, and we were escorted by a magnificent retinue till we arrived at Scholtvien, where the princess reposed for a short period, previous to entering the capital.

"A sumptuous banquet was prepared; but the princess was too deeply affected to partake of it; she was on the point of yielding herself to her future

destiny, for better or worse. All at once was heard the loud tramp of horse; and a party of cavaliers, magnificently arrayed, drew bit at the post-house where we then were. Soon they were announced as noblemen of the court, deputed to honour the arrival of the royal beauty, and escort her with due honours to the arms of her imperial consort. They petitioned to be admitted, in order to compliment her on the occasion; she was extremely embarrassed,—even taken by surprise; for in the special orders we had received to conduct our route, which were very exact, no mention had been made of any lordly embassy of the kind. But, impelled by some secret feeling, or by mere curiosity, the Infanta resolved to receive the noble deputation, and Prince Dietrichstein was ordered to admit them. Several fine, handsome, young noblemen, of high birth, decorated with their splendid orders, were ushered into our presence;—the names of each being announced by our chamberlain, as they approached us. They were familiar to us as household names,—being those of the celebrated Count Harrach, Bronner, Falkenstein; and when the last was pronounced, I observed the princess regard him with a penetrating look; nay, she blushed; and the same emotion was visible in the countenance of the noble stranger. He seemed about five-and-twenty, of middling height, but most captivating figure, and features still more interesting and expressive. He was decidedly handsome, but with rather too great fullness of the under lip, which detracted from the exquisite symmetry, and perhaps the energy, of his countenance.

"Seated in a crimson velvet chair, splendidly

decorated, she received the youthful nobles, one by one, and gave them her hand, which they pressed to their lips, as they drew nigh, offering their obeisance in the most engaging manner.

"Count Falkenstein came last, who was more embarrassed than the others; and when he took her fair hand—such was his excessive agitation—so extraordinary the expression with which his eyes rested on that lovely face, as almost to startle us; but the next moment they were succeeded by an air of the most respectful seriousness.

"To the astonishment of all present, the princess suddenly rose, her face in a perfect glow, and she bent before the noble count, as if she had wished in her turn to kneel in homage to his merit. He took both her hands in his, as if to prevent such a movement, with a delicacy charming to us both, but without timidity of any kind, while he again pressed them to his lips with marked tenderness.

"All eyes were bent in wonder on this singular scene, which lastly scarcely a minute; but what was our joy, when one of the lords whispered us that the count was no other than the Emperor Leopold himself. His passion, brooking no farther delay, had burst through the restraints of royal etiquette: he had hoped to see and observe her in his assumed name; but his portrait which she had received at Madrid, betrayed him to her at the very moment of his entrance, so striking was the resemblance between them. Besides, when he took her hand, he pressed it with involuntary emotion, and eyed her with one impassioned glance, which told her throbbing heart, it could be no other than her lord."

"Ah," cried Catherine, "how delightful! An emperor in disguise, clasping the hands of his lovely bride, who instantly recognises him by his speaking look! I declare, if it is not exactly as we find it in all the best romances of chivalry! — But about the diamond rose, you spoke of, my lady?" inquired she.

"Stop, I have not done," said the garrulous baroness, "not of a great while yet. Well! after this pretty interview, the infanta called for all the little *bijoux* and presents she intended for her royal consort. Among these were several worked by her own fair hands! Then there was a *chapeau-bras*, surmounted with the most brilliant, red plumes, and the *agraffe* was, indeed, a splendid rose-diamond, of inestimable value. The emperor was delighted with all he saw, as she spread them before him with her own white, small hands; in particular, his *chapeau-bras* seemed to tickle his fancy, and he instantly took possession of it, and never after lost sight of it. The other things he ordered to be packed up, and sent to Vienna; but on mounting, he displayed his new hat with an air of exultation, and after gazing some time, on its splendidly beautiful rose, he put it on his royal head. Yet, will you believe me? before he got to Neustadt, his chamberlain, Count Czernin, observed that it was actually gone,— not the hat, you know, but the fine, rose-diamond,— lost!!" An expression of horror followed this terrible announcement, uttered by the speaker, with a singular emphasis and solemnity, which almost made her cry. "Well! messengers were despatched back—back, and on all sides; every house

and village were ransacked; passengers and market-people were arrested; inquiries,— inquisitions,— threats,— punishments,— but, alas! all with no avail — the rose-diamond was gone, really gone. Ah, but don't cry! for one day — a good while after—a common-looking man,—a peasant, walked into court, and brought the long-lost treasure,— the rose-diamond itself. The loss had given rise to the greatest alarm; for it was reported that some Hungarian malcontents, learning the small attendance upon the emperor, had resolved to lay an ambuscade, and possess themselves of his person. It was only the rapidity of the emperor's movements, which foiled this horrible attempt; while the rose-diamond, it was believed, had been found by them, but not returned to its royal owner."

"It was his love, then, which saved him!" cried Catherine: "how touching, how delightful!" Mother and daughter both smiled, as they exchanged looks.

"For me," returned the former, "I took a different view of this serious affair. On the princess's arrival at Neustadt, she learnt the disaster; and both of us began to indulge the most serious apprehensions. The emperor had just lost his fair bride's present, to which he had attached the highest value; I felt a prognostic, that the sweet donor would not be long in his possession, and my fears were but too fatally verified."

"Aye, but mamma, the rose was found," exclaimed Julia.

"Why they said so," she replied; "but many sensible people maintain, to this day, that it was not the same; that the empress mother observing the pro-

found grief of her son for its loss, had recourse to this innocent stratagem, to set his mind at rest. He was quite restored to good spirits, but in a few years he lost his beloved consort,—mark that!"

Thus terminated their conversation, in which Catherine took so special an interest. She often reverted to the topic, to anecdotes respecting the court, — a subject quite inexhaustible in the hands of the old maid of honour, and they imparted, at the same time, to Catherine, much juster ideas respecting the world of fashion. Every day increased her attachment to her amiable and excellent protectresses, who, on their part, cherished a feeling of tender friendship for their young protegée, whose sensible and just remarks interested, while her simplicity amused, them. She had not, however, as yet, ventured to speak to them respecting her own situation, or of the affairs of her family. It would become necessary, however, to enter on this delicate topic, and on the most painful part of it, namely, Ludmilla. It was now time to reply to her letter, an undertaking which she had not hitherto been able to set about, having delayed, until the painful emotions, she had experienced on its reception, had been somewhat softened by time, so that she might write to her without any angry feeling. As soon as she thought she had attained this state of mind, she commenced her task. Passing over, in silence, her own intimacy with Zriny, and making no mention of the past, she confined her observations to their mother, some family affairs, and her own journey to Vienna, &c. Her pride prevented her from indulging in the slightest complaint or reproach on

account of the fate to which her sister's flight had condemned her, or on her own ruined hopes. The letter was brief, but sufficiently affectionate to induce Ludmilla to wish to keep up the correspondence with her family, or, at least, with her sister.

It was now necessary to dispatch the letter by a sure conveyance, which was by no means easy, Ludmilla having given no other address but that of Madame de Villecamp, it seemed that the best means of transmitting it would be through the French ambassador, to whom she must have an introduction through Madame de Dunerwald. How to ask this from that lady, was the subject of much reflection. She well knew that both mother and daughter could not be ignorant of her sister's extraordinary disappearance, and that their silence on the subject only proceeded from feelings of delicacy, and by a studied evasion of the subject. It was to be presumed, that if Catherine confided to her new friend a letter addressed to Madame de Villecamp, at Paris, without any further information, the secret would be quickly guessed, particularly as Julia had the means of making inquiry about that lady, and would, no doubt, feel offended at being kept in ignorance. Catherine, therefore, decided on communicating to Julia, that Madame de Villecamp was her sister; begging, at the same time, to have no further questions put to her on the subject, and to be allowed to maintain that silence respecting her situation, which Ludmilla, for important family reasons, had required of her.

Julia seemed touched with this mark of Catherine's confidence, and embraced her; promising,

not only to take charge of the letter, but to avoid inquiring into the mysterious subject, and to keep the secret already confided to her. The same evening Madame de Dunerwald gave the packet to the French ambassador, whom she met at a grand party, recommending him particularly to transmit it to the address.

His excellency, with a significant smile, inquired if she knew Madame de Villecamp.

"Not at all," replied Julia, — "the letter was given to me by one who has never had the honour of seeing you, and who would not have dared to address herself directly to your excellency."

"I am happy, madam, to have an opportunity of rendering you the slightest service, and promise to forward the letter with the greatest care; but I knew from the first that it could not come from you, nor from any one intimately connected with you."

"And why so?" enquired Julia; "I cannot comprehend."

"Madam," replied his excellency, "I knew the elevation of your character, and can appreciate the principles by which you are ever actuated, and which render you at once so estimable and amiable; I can, therefore, assuredly conclude that if you knew Madame de Villecamp, either personally or by reputation, you would have declined all communication with her."

"I have already informed your excellency, that I have not the slightest knowledge of the lady; but excuse me, if I ask why I neither should, nor would have anything to do with her?"

The marquis was a little embarrassed at this, and

replied hesitatingly, "that Madame de Villecamp was certainly a very fine, a very accomplished woman; but one of a class not afraid of being above prejudices, or of being judged, perhaps falsely, although according to their professed principles."

"Is she of doubtful reputation?" inquired Julia, with more eagerness than she would have liked to have shown, but excited by the interest which she took in Catherine's affairs. His excellency, however, attributed her anxiety to her nice sense of honour, wounded, no doubt, at being supposed to have the least connection with a woman of questionable character.

"Not exactly so, madam," he replied: "I only meant to say that the lady's conduct was not regulated by the usual forms of society. Although so young, her house is the rendezvous of all the most distinguished wits, and men of talent of the day; in short, of all who either possess literary fame, or aspire to it."

"But I cannot see any harm in that," replied Julia; "I have heard that at Paris, many women of the most estimable and respectable character, open their house to every man of distinguished merit in literature or science; and that it is this which renders society so delightful, and the influence of our sex on the manners of the age, so powerful, and so beneficial."

"Very true, madam," replied his excellency, "but these patrons of talent are known and esteemed on other grounds; and I had the honour of informing you that Madame de Villecamp was above submitting to the usual forms of society."

"What does your excellency mean?"

"The usual meaning attached by the world, when speaking of forms,—those forms which point out our situation in the social scale, our place in society, and the opinion generally entertained respecting us. Such forms ought to be well defined and clear, and are, in fact, governed by laws well understood and established. It appears that Madame de Villecamp has preferred leaving the public in some doubt as to the *form* in which she entered society."

"How so?" inquired Julia.

"Nothing certain is known as to who she is, or where she comes from," replied the marquis.

"Is she not then the wife or the widow of a Flemish officer?" enquired Julia.

"And a native of Germany," added his excellency; "as she sometimes briefly says to those who seem anxious to know. But do you not think that a woman, endowed with so much beauty and talent, falling as it were, from the clouds into the heart of Paris,—recommended to some of the first families, and rich enough to set up an establishment of the first class herself, is likely to produce a sufficient effect, to warrant every one to talk about her, and feel an interest in her, at least to desire to know who she is?"

"Certainly," replied Julia; "but it is well known who she is,—Madame de Villecamp, a native of Belgium."

"Very well;" replied his excellency, "this has been enquired into; curiosity — enmity — if you will — have been at work respecting her. Inquiry has been made in the regiment in which her deceased husband is said to have served, in the province

where she said he had lived, in the city where she said she was born, &c. &c.; but all that could be learned, was in direct opposition to what she had affirmed."

"This, perhaps, is the effect of chance, or of not having made inquiry at the proper quarter," replied Julia. "I cannot suppose that any one would have dared to question the lady herself on the subject."

"Such a piece of indiscretion was not necessary: there are matters that required no conjuror to divine them, and that lead us to the truth—such, for instance, as the intimacy subsisting between this lady and Count Zriny."

"Count Zriny! did you say? Can that be the same with the emperor's chamberlain and favourite, the brother-in-law of Tökely?"

"The very same; the same youthful adventurer, ever hatching audacious projects, and equally aspiring in his conduct towards the fair sex, as in political affairs." It is whispered, privately, that the pretended Flemish widow has been brought by him to Paris, and that she is in reality a Hungarian lady, with whom he has run off."

These last words threw an unexpected light on the subject. Julia, therefore, continued to question the marquis, and was informed by him of all the injurious reports that were circulated at Paris, respecting the sister of her young friend. Some would-be clever people supposed there was a secret marriage; but the greater part classed Ludmilla with the frailer portion of her sex, and adopted towards her a corresponding line of conduct.

Julia took special care not to acquaint Catherine

with what she had heard; but her curiosity was too strongly excited, not to induce her to inquire more narrowly into the subject. It was not difficult to obtain from her young friend, devoid, as she was, of all duplicity, information on many points which confirmed her suspicions, without giving Catherine the least reason to imagine that she had betrayed her sister's secret. Julia was sufficiently skilful to draw correct conclusions from an inadvertent expression, or a misplaced attempt at concealment. However, Catherine saw nothing of all this; and Julia simply urged on her to observe the most profound silence respecting Madame de Villecamp—not to speak of her before any one—and if her name should ever be mentioned in her presence, to seem not to know it. The veil of mystery with which Ludmilla had wrapt herself, served as a sufficient pretext for this; and Catherine engaged the more willingly to follow her advice, as it was in accordance with the rule she had laid down for herself, and which she had observed so well, that Julia had frequent occasion to admire, in her young friend, that happy union of native simplicity of character with a seriousness, a prudent reserve, and a love of truth, that formed the main elements of her character.

Speaking of the great world, and the style of Parisian life, it was impossible for the lady of Dunerwald to conceal from her its real nature; the arts, the perfidy, and hollowness, to be met with on every side. Catherine was not a little alarmed; she could not have supposed society was quite so bad, and she now almost looked forward to her seclusion in a cloister without regret. Her judi-

cious guardians then sought to enlarge her judgment and her information, by convincing her that society, in general, was of a "mingled yarn," composed of a mixture of vices and virtues, of good and evil. They took pleasure in expanding her fine and docile mind; teaching her to recognize in her own heart the principles of virtue and of enlightened religion, to set off against the too pleasing, but illusory sentiments, which till then she had nurtured. By this process, she came to view the convent, and the strange life of its recluses, in a different point of view. The strong, high-barred windows, and the massy walls of the edifice, made her tremble; though she felt that virtue and misfortune might there find a last refuge from the world. She had conceived that the nun's life was a series of mortifications and penalties, but found so much true piety and benevolence mingled with the ordinary passions of the human heart, that she was long at a loss on what to decide; but more mature reflection made her cling with more pertinacity than ever, to the promise given to her cousin Sandor, of coming to no hasty decision.

Introduced into the first society, and mingling more and more with the world, Catherine now lost that peculiar timidity and want of energy, which formerly made her appear to less advantage. Still, her protectress would not permit her to partake in the lighter and more fashionable amusements of the day, and she had too much respect for Madame de Preysing, to wish to break through her injunctions on this head. Fortunately, the carnival also came to a close; and piety and prayer, moreover, were more natural and easily submitted to, at a pe-

riod when political storms, and convulsions, shook empires and society to their foundations. More alarming symptoms soon threatened new disasters. Hungary was in a highly disturbed state, and people anticipated another war with the Turks.

Catherine was in the habit of hearing repeated, all she had before learnt from the lips of father Isidor, when conversing with her mother. Tökely was believed to be in league with the Porte, and desirous of interrupting the truce. It was then considered scandalous, almost impious, to enter into treaty with the infidels, and the latter seemed now seriously preparing to make new aggressions. The court of Vienna was well informed of these various movements ; for Austria had too much reason, to dread both the Hungarian malcontents, and her Ottoman enemy, not to make the most strenuous exertions to meet the gathering storm.

The negociations, commenced the preceding year by the Count of Caprara, at Constantinople, were broken off; he had been received by the grand Vizier with the utmost coolness, for the latter was assured that Vienna, was destined to fall by the sword of the Moslems.

The count's description of the grand seignor's preparations was almost appalling! the most serious fears were spread abroad ; and Leopold sought, by every means within his reach, to strengthen his cause, by drawing closer, or forming, new alliances. While taking every method of defence, he entered into a strict union, with the elector of Bavaria : the princes of the Germanic confederation were summoned to bring their several contingents, and to march to the assistance of Austria.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE these measures were in progress for external defence, no less zeal was shewn in strengthening the garrison, and all the munitions of war, in the interior of the city. The public mind was in a state of alarm and agitation. The lady of Dunerwald viewed with terror a conflict in which her beloved consort must be exposed to the utmost peril. As in every great crisis, however, hope and fear, by turns, seized upon the varying rumours of the hour, —sometimes exaggerating, and at others, underrating the extent of the approaching evil.

Thus the conflicting interests of the great powers were on the eve, it was said, of being reconciled; yet the ensuing morning brought tidings of the most fearful import; —such a prince had refused his contingent; France was arming to support the Turks; while Sobieski had declined the alliance proposed to him by Austria. The inhabitants were a prey to anxiety and suspense—a suspense of the most agonizing kind, at a period when war was conducted with such unsparing ferocity.

With all its horrors in our own days, they bear no comparison with the sufferings it inflicted near two centuries ago.

At length came tidings of the assembly of the imperial forces under Charles of Lorraine, a commander universally respected; of the promised support of Bavaria; and, finally, that the Polish king had decided to take the side of Austria. That country seemed to rouse, at the voice of its heroic ally, from its dream of terror, such was the warlike renown, and such the personal influence of Sobieski. On the return of Count Wallenstein with a favourable reply from Warsaw, it was considered, by all ranks, as equivalent to the approach of a mighty army, to rescue them from impending doom. He was followed soon by the king's ambassador, charged by the republic to enter into the terms of a new alliance with the imperial cabinet, and concert such measures as might be called for by the exigency of the time.

However critical his situation at this moment, Leopold too highly valued the dignity of his imperial crown, the reputation of his ally, and the splendour which his station exacted from him, not to dismiss all anxious fears for the result, and received the royal envoy with the same magnificence and ceremony which he so ostentatiously displayed in times of peace. A succession of levees, balls, dinners, and slow and stately celebration of different festivals and orders, marked the jealous etiquette with which the imperial family surrounded their court.

The lady of Dunerwald, in the idea that the Porte would now renounce its hostile attitude, re-

covered all her gaiety, assisted in the court festivals, and even prevailed with Madame de Preysing to permit Catherine to accompany her. She was present at one of the grand operas, then unique in their kind, and thought more suitable for the ear of an intended recluse, than any other species of popular entertainment. She appeared to the greatest advantage, richly, yet elegantly attired, glowing in youthful charms and beauty, — her whole shape and air presenting something too enchanting to the eye to be gazed upon without warm emotion.

The novelty and splendour of the scene, the throng of patrician equipages, the illumination of the streets, as she approached, with the glittering arms of the soldiery; and the mounted patrolles, eager to keep back the populace, hurrying to mingle in the scene; — all combined to make the liveliest impression upon our young provincial beauty, who listened to and beheld the strange collision of sights and sounds with all the zest of wondering infancy. The rich equipage of the emperor, still bearing the ensigns of the old Spanish costume, then approached, and cleared the way to the grand staircase; the approach led through a lóng avenue of citron and orange-trees, with other glowing and beautiful shrubs, presenting a little paradise in the midst of winter, doubly brilliant from lustres of rich lights, which shed fresh radiance on the forms of beauty and chivalry, which followed in rapid and dazzling pomp. The interior itself was a fresh source of wonder. In those times the most important towns had no permanent theatres. Presburg, then so noble, was

without one; and the Viennese opera was extolled as one of the most admirable triumphs of genius and art. Rich crystal lustres, suspended from the dome, and corresponding brilliances round the sides, illuminating the entire house, for the first time struck the eye. The scenes, draperies, boxes, and orchestra, all shone with the luxuriance of a new ornamental genius,—borrowed from Italy, and not unworthy the emulation of a Raphaelesque model, or of Paul Veronese himself. The preparations to accommodate the rank and beauty of the court were on a magnificent scale; the places assigned to the lady of Dunerwald and her company, adjoined the royal seats, elevated in the most conspicuous site of the house. The opening scenery presented a beautiful landscape, so artfully drawn, as to give a strong illusion to the eye, even to the waving and murmur of the trees and waters, while the golden eagle, with two heads, crowned the whole of these new-wrought decorations, and seemed to cleave, with its soaring pinion, the blue, etherial sphere.

Catherine imagined herself transported into some fairy land; and could not cease from expressing her delight, and putting a thousand inquiries to her friend, not a little amused at the rustic wonder and naïveté which marked every movement of her young protégée, though her opinions evinced a high and cultivated mind.

On the appearance of the court, a murmur of applause ran through the house, all eyes were directed to the spot. This was succeeded by a profound silence; the body-guard of the emperor, with drawn swords, followed by a throng of pages in

Spanish costume, sparkling with gold, succeeded by the grand master of the ceremonies, with his baton of state, ushered in the imperial family, with the entire court and ministers in full costume. That of the Polish envoy and his suite was eminently contrasted, by its breadth and solid costliness, with the appearance of the court. The lady of Dunerwald, pointed out the person of the emperor to Catherine: a person, every way so opposite to the idea she had formed from the description of Madame de Preysing, that she could with difficulty persuade herself he was that gallant cavalier of whom she had heard, who now stept before his lady queen into the house. He appeared advanced beyond the meridian of life, of insignificant proportions, arrayed in the old Spanish style, in double folds of black silk stuff, fringed on the borders with plaited lace. A Spanish mantle hung down to his knees; an embroidery of fine Flanders-lace covered his neck and breast; long and ample ruffles of the same reached to the end of his fingers, and he wore a sword, the handle of which glittered with diamonds. He carried his hat in the Spanish fashion, of black velvet, with grand ostrich feathers and a superb agraffe of diamonds, which reminded Catherine of his romantic interview with his first consort. But his features were now worn, his face pale and thoughtful, and his large under lip gave him a look of ill-humour, little in keeping with a hero of romance. He was followed by the empress Leonora, magnificently attired; but this could not conceal the effects of age, and want of natural beauty. An expression of austerity and sorrow contrasted strangely with her splendid robes, be-

neath which, too, she was known to carry all the instruments of torture worn by penitents. Catherine sighed, as she thought, that she might one day be compelled to suffer a similar look under the linen habit of the nuns, instead of the splendid drapery of a court.

The opera at length opened with a grand symphony, which seemed to thrill through the whole house, and most of all, through the soul and frame of Catherine, who, before, all eye and curiosity, was now absorbed in the softness and sweetness of the delicious passions that tremble in unison with the chords which strike the ear.

The curtain rose; it was Angelica and Alcina, from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, — the scene a superb saloon in Alcina's pavilion;* the actors appeared in the costume of the age of Charlemagne, combined with the taste and splendour of their own times. Thus the Paladins wore huge whigs under their iron helmets, the tails of which reached half down the back, add to which, a kind of small doublet *en baleine*. The piece opened with a ballet, accompanied by a chorus of cavaliers and nymphs, who proclaimed the arrival of their sovereign. Alcina at length appeared, attended by Medoro, Rogiero, Bradamanti, with their formidable suite; soon followed by the beautiful Angelica herself. During the progress of the piece, the floor

* This opera was actually played in the *Favorità* palace at Vienna, when Leopold was present. The theatre was erected over the grand canal; in the second act, the stage disappearing, presented the spectacle of boats, sailing along. The *libretto* of this singular exhibition is still in existence, decorated with engravings.

suddenly disappeared, and the vision of a clear lake, covered with vessels, met the eye. Here a congregation of monsters, terrestial and marine; there a naval combat; battles; a dance of furies; metamorphoses of the most wondrous kind, obedient to the motions of the fair magician's wand, and all ending with the most splendid catastrophe in the world. Brilliant transparencies, seen through a grove of laurel, presented a succession of inscriptions and devices in honour of the august House of Austria, and its new ally, the king of the Poles. Catherine, transported into a world of enchantment, of which she had never dreamed, was lost in a crowd of contending emotions, — alternate surprise, terror, joy, and grief. During an interlude, when refreshments were brought in, she had time to recall her scattered spirits from this enchanted world, and fix her attention upon the objects around. She spoke to her companion, who told her the names of the personages composing the emperor's suite, — men distinguished by rank or reputation; generals and ministers, among whom figured the celebrated Montecuculi, the Prince Zobrowitz, with many others. She thought their appearance did little credit to their high character; and no one, in this point of view, was to be compared with Count Zriny, and his noble cousin Sandor. The ladies of the court in their splendid dresses, and the pretty pages in their Spanish fashions, standing behind their masters' seats, were to her a source of greater novelty and delight. All at once, in the throng of figures, her eye rested on one, which excited the utmost emotion and surprise. She could scarcely

give credence to her senses; and fancied herself still in a dream. She even studiously averted her eyes,— yet they hung with a sort of fascination upon that one object. It could be no delusion; it was he—Zriny,—her sister's husband,—he who had exercised an influence so fatal over her own heart; seated near her in his rich Hungarian uniform,—and engaged in animated conversation with a lady, more remarkable for the splendour of her appearance, than her beauty. He in a few moments turning suddenly round, caught Catherine's eye intently fixed upon his face. A rapid change crossed his handsome countenance: he seemed as if about to approach her; and she summoned all her presence of mind to think how she should receive him; yet full of trembling emotion, which was depicted upon her speaking face. Both were rivetted for a moment by each other's gaze; the next,—could it be possible!— he turned away with the cold air of one whose eye had rested upon a stranger's; resuming with perfect calmness his conversation with the lady. Catherine was astonished; and supposed that he really had not recognized her; indeed, his continued indifference tended to confirm her in this idea; and it was any thing but flattering. If he had ceased to cherish a recollection of her, she was at least his sister; yet not one smile or token of recognition! She felt it deeply,—it afflicted her, and she harassed herself with conjectures as to what she had done to merit so marked a slight. At last, her attention was diverted by an elderly lady, just behind her, who seemed to address herself to one much younger.

"Do you see the handsome count, making love

to the proud niece of the prime minister? They say he will marry her."

"How can you imagine it!" replied the other lady; "she is so ugly!"

"You are right, replied the former; "but she is so rich! Zriny has little fortune. Her gold pieces will serve to hide the marks of the small-pox."

"I cannot believe it!" cried the younger lady, with warmth; "he cannot be so very mean;—she is neither handsome nor amiable: no, he can never marry the countess."

"Ah! you little know him," replied the elder. "Zriny is terribly ambitious; rank, pride and power are his idols! Who can chalk him out a finer career than the lady's uncle? The government of a province for her dowry, would turn all her awkwardness and ugliness into grace and beauty; or rather, he will not trouble himself about her, but pay his vows at some fairer shrine."

"No doubt of that," said the young lady, smiling; "he was made to captivate all eyes;— has all, both in person and manners, to be but too agreeable. He will succeed in any career; he wants no minister and ugly niece to obtain any place he may wish. Is he not the favourite of the emperor himself?"

"How eloquent you are in the count's praise!" said the elder.

"I simply do him justice; the world acknowledges it. He must—he will be, rich and powerful; will occupy what post he pleases in the whole empire."

"I differ with you there! No fortune, his family estate confiscated; depend upon it, people will

think twice, before they give their daughter to a handsome beggar, whose father perished on the scaffold."

"But he is innocent," retorted his young advocate; "and the emperor's regard has completely renovated his name. Who shall dare to remember, what the monarch himself is pleased to forget?"

"Ah, the charmer!" replied the elder lady; "this is another proof of his seductive powers. He turns your heads, and then he ruins you; — all out of vanity; and were you not already married, you might hope to have that honour."

"You are rather severe, madam," interrupted the young lady in an altered tone; "and you are deceived; for my praise is wholly disinterested; the count is already wed."

"Wed, truly! how can that be?" (Catherine was now all ear.)

"Yes, wed I say! he married a young Flemish lady."

Here the old lady burst into a laugh— "Ah, ah, ah! a very pretty story! — I heard of it too — some Marchioness of Villecamp, was it not? Don't believe a word of it; only his mistress; ah, ah, ah!"

"No such thing," exclaimed the younger; (Catherine could have embraced her;) "she was the widow of a distinguished officer; a woman of infinite fashion, grace and wit; she enjoys the best society of Paris, — she is a delightful, angelic creature."

"Yes, I dare say, she is pretty enough," replied the elder lady, in a most provoking tone; "an awkward, plain-faced Miss, would ill have played

such a part. She is, however, a despicable creature: no one of any reputation will notice her. Her company is all of one class; she enjoys no real consideration."

"Who is she then?" inquired the younger: "do you know her history?"

"That I do! She was a young novice whom he ran away with from her convent, and carried her to Paris, where he could live more at his ease. If he were married,—if she were really a person of consideration, why does she not make her appearance with him at court? Why, my dear, doesn't she go by the same name?"

"Family reasons, perhaps."

"Ah, you are too good! It is all nothing but intrigue; a momentary preference, that will soon end, like so many others of a similar kind. He will marry the plain countess, and pay his present incumbrance off with her money; or perhaps make her over to some kind friend."

"Not very likely, I think; for if she came out of a convent, she ought to be considered virtuous till the moment she first saw and loved her seducer."

"I know not whether she were nun or novice; perhaps a mere pensioner; but whatever she were, if she even married him in secret, she must be content to be his mistress in public opinion. Now, what virtuous woman would submit to so humiliating a condition?"

Such was the language of a woman, respected for the strictness of her principles, if not for her age; each word from whose lips smote like a

dagger, to the heart of the unhappy Catherine. Fortunately, the second act was at hand, and imposed silence on the house; but she had already heard too much. What a fearful situation for her sister! how severely was she judged! and what wretched prospects for her disastrous and mysterious union! What cold-blooded vanity in her lord, to refuse her the sanction of a name, and to aspire to the paltry reputation of a man of pleasure, at liberty to carry his vows to whatever other shrine he approved!

All her sympathy in the magic scene was at an end: in vain for her the mimic lake now spread its surface to the view, the enchanted isles floating on its bosom, and the barges splendidly decorated, sailing obedient to the mariner's call. And next a volcano, at the summons of fair Alcina's wand, appeared on one of the islands; and a terrific monster, starting from the flames, seemed on the point of devouring the wretched Angelica, chained to a rock upon the sea-side, But, petrified at sight of the shield of Rugiero, the fearful object was instantly transformed by the magician, Atlante, into two ships.

Add to this spectacle, all that the charms of music and the dance could combine, to awaken the attention of Catherine, but their charm was fled; the image of Zriny haunted her, like that of some evil genius, with his unholy rites. The way in which he had fascinated the eye, and seduced the heart of her sister, whom she likened to Angelica, exposed in the stony isle, deserted by all her friends, and on the point of being devoured by the

monster of shame and calumny. And, alas! she had neither the valiant Rugiero, nor the faithful Bradamante for her champions. Unless she herself, and Sandor, without the aid of magic shield, took up her cause, what would become of her! She was, indeed, prepared to do all that a sister could, to rescue her from the malice of the world: she would write to Sandor, and to her uncle of Ferronay, what she had heard, and acquaint them with the treachery of her consort.

She felt relieved, after coming to this resolution, and sought again to interest herself in the passing scene, and in watching the departure of the court. The house began to clear, and the tumult, and bustle of equipages was heard as loud as before. Catherine perceived that the count had joined the suite of the emperor, in company with the young lady with whom he had been so earnestly conversing, who appeared to belong also to that of the empress. Zriny passed close to Catherine, without deigning one look of recognition. She felt doubly indignant, vowing anew, to snatch her sister from the power of one so base and perfidious.

On retiring from the theatre, Julia advised her young companion to keep as close to her side as possible. This was, however, extremely difficult; the crush was tremendous; and spite of their united efforts, they were, ere long, separated, and borne to some distance from each other. All at once she heard her name pronounced by some one near her; she startled, for she was an entire stranger in Vienna, or known only to one, whose voice she now seemed to recognise. She turned towards the spot whence

she thought it came, and trembled with alarm, as she saw a man wrapped in a large mantle, his face concealed, and who again pronounced her name, adding,—" Pity the most wretched of mankind! hear me, if only for a single moment." It could be no other; it was the voice of Zriny, close to her ear. She even saw his insidious smile; her pride and anger were in arms; she would have rushed from the spot, but could not move a step. She turned away her head, but he still persevered: " Listen, I beseech you, for the sake of your dear Ludmilla; it is for her I speak." The sound of that sweet, harmonious voice, recalling all the past, shook her resolution, and her emotion was extreme. Still, anger flushed her countenance; she was about to express it, when, again interrupting her; " For Heaven's sake, sweet Catherine, no reproaches now; judge me after you have heard. To-morrow, doubtless, you will go to mass, at the convent of the Heaven-Gate, — there I must meet you."

Too alarmed, too agitated to refuse, or to comply, Catherine stood rivetted to the spot; and when she again looked round her, Zriny had disappeared. It was now her object, to rejoin her friend; for though separated, Julia had never lost sight of her, and in a few moments her carriage was announced. During their return, Catherine was sad and silent; her friend attributed to fatigue, what was the result of violent and conflicting emotion. What was she to think?— how should she act, indulging, as she did, such strange and fearful suspicions of the count? She was startled at the idea of meeting him;

yet did not her silence imply assent; and his last words conveyed the impression, that he was more unfortunate than culpable. On reaching Madame de Preysing's, whither the lady of Dunerwald conducted her, to recount her evening's adventures to her mother, Catherine was still silent and absorbed, and soon, under pretence of a violent headache, asked permission to withdraw to rest.

CHAPTER XI.



Alas! the tumult of Catherine's spirits was as little calmed by solitude, — now, more than ever, she felt distressed. Torn by conflicting motives, passions, and doubts, what ought she, — what could she do? Was Zriny, the treacherous being he was represented? Was he only the object of envy and calumny? And what could her sister mean, by stating, that he did all in his power to promote her happiness! How did this last, again, harmonize with his particular attentions, of which she had been a witness, to another lady? Was he merely acting a part to deceive the world? — had refused to recognise her before the court, from the peculiarity of his situation? The whole was a web of mystery, which she could, by no dexterity, unravel; yet, with all its mystery, his manner was so noble, so gentle, so full of confidence in naming Ludmilla; — no, he could not be a villain! She would not judge him harshly, — the husband of her sister, her half-brother, — had he not a right to claim her interest in his welfare, and favourable regard. Assuredly the elopement was wrong; it must have been displeas-

ing also to the count's family; and were their union to be incautiously announced, it might entail on both, a series of persecutions and miseries. Hence the cause of his apparent slight, and the extreme reserve he had shown in public. The result of all these was a determination to meet him, and to run whatever risk there might be, for the sake of her beloved sister.

Morning, however, as is usual, brought other feelings; the imagination, and the excitation of the past day, having yielded to repose. To meet him too in a church, at such an hour, shocked her sense of propriety, and her sincerity at once. It seemed impossible :— and what might be the result of such a meeting, should she be observed? She resolved, then, not to go, spite of whatever view he might take of her conduct. He had injured her family sufficiently already, she considered; she would incur no fresh responsibility of any kind, and she determined not to go to the place appointed. In the midst of these conflicting feelings, the hour arrived, and nearly the whole town was preparing to be present at the solemn festival; for the image of the Virgin, the saint patroness, had the reputation of having worked several miracles. At the time of which we are speaking, the citizens led a more domestic and quiet life, than at present; there were less both of social and public assemblies, fewer theatres, balls, promenades; in short, of those refinements, and luxuries of civilization, which every where meet the eye. They were sought for only in churches, — a sort of chivalrous spirit of religion embodied its mysteries in the splendours of worldly sway; and devotion, mixed with curiosity, sought as far as

possible, to multiply the number of saintly fêtes, as a means of general reunion and communication.

On this occasion, the monastery was opened to the public, and most splendidly decorated. The nuns received the visits of friends and relatives, treating them with sweetmeats, and exhibiting the various specimens of their quiet labours. The church was magnificently illuminated; the people hastened thither in throngs; and beauty, rank, and splendour, from every quarter, filled the busy streets and squares. The pious ceremonies were concluded, with the holy benediction, which was celebrated with all that pomp, and all that music, with a full choir of female voices, could impress through the senses, upon the soul. At that moment, the throng was innumerable; and from the position of the great altar, and the entire celebration of the ceremonies, Zriny could have selected no better spot to converse with his sister-in-law unobserved. Undecided to the last, Catherine, listened to the bell announcing the last act of the grand religious drama before her. She had beheld from her windows, the throngs hurrying to the spot, and she thought of him, who might then be anxiously expecting her; — perhaps amiable and unfortunate, and little deserving of such neglect. Her imagination, too, painted in forcible colours, what sorrow her absence might ultimately produce, for the gentle hearted Ludmilla, even to Zriny himself; and she could not resist the appeal to all the best feelings of her nature, and she instantly set out. Madame de Preysing was too ill to accompany her; she was attended only by a domestic, whose curiosity, she knew, would be too well occupied to

interrupt her interview with the count. Her heart beat violently, as she stepped over the sacred threshold, — she felt it a sort of profanation to be there upon such an object; but it was too late to hesitate, and she soon found herself in the sombre recess behind the altar, to which she had been directed. What were her terror and surprise on reaching it, to behold, not the form of Zriny, but that of a much taller figure, his face concealed in his mantle, with only his dark eyes visible, and fixed intently upon her. She cast her eyes away in alarm, as if in search of her attendant; she secretly began to accuse the count of some fresh plot, when her name was audibly heard close to her. It was Zriny. An involuntary awe crept over her; she could not meet his dark and piercing glance, yet mixed with an expressive melancholy, which gave new interest to his handsome features. The sound of his voice, too, again seemed to penetrate to her inmost soul, and awaken the utmost sympathy and pity.

"How can I thank you," said he, in a half whisper, "for having listened to my prayer? Oh, Catherine! you grant me a favour — so dear and cherished — that I feel grateful to the bottom of my soul."

"No more of that!" returned Catherine, "we have only a few moments; speak to me of my sister."

"She is well! and as happy as a woman can be supposed, who unites her fate to one of the most unfortunate of beings."

"Why, then," exclaimed Catherine, "does she not bear your name? why is she not with you?

why refuse to recognise me?" and she threw as much severity into her tone as possible.

Zriny cast down his eyes, and his features grew yet darker. "It is my unhappy lot," he resumed; "I dare not avow the possession of a treasure, more valued than all the world beside; I came here to justify my conduct, but the time is so short! Ah! how much I have to confide to you—on which to consult your excellent judgment; I submit myself wholly to you; for I know that you will not refuse to sympathize, to console, to pity, though an unjust world condemn."

Catherine felt moved; and she could as little gaze upon those noble features clouded by grief, as hear his voice without a corresponding throb. No, she could not now think ill of him: he had been vilely calumniated; and she turned towards him with more of confidence and gentleness in her looks and words; "Count! it is possible you may have motives I cannot comprehend; but the world cannot appreciate them any more than myself, and the honour of a sister is at stake."

"Your sister relies wholly upon me," was the answer: "she knows my principles, all my views and motives. Yes, her mind is too elevated to sacrifice them to her own worldly views. Read this, my sweet, excellent sister; it contains my vindication: peruse it with attention, for it will ensure me your friendship and esteem." He put it into her hands with an expression of countenance, so confiding, yet so appealing and sorrowful, as went to her inmost heart,—prest her hands between his, and before she could reply a word, had hastily vanished.

Catherine stood rivetted to the spot, the letter in her hand, absorbed in strange conjectures as to the new light it must throw upon the fate of her sister; for he in whose hands it was, had not only preserved the same air of mystery, but refused to relieve her anxiety from his own lips. She looked around,—her attendant was gone; the church was more thronged than ever; she could not stir; the tall mysterious stranger, too, approached her; his dark eyes bent upon hers. It was now, in her anguish, that she repented her rash step; and she continued almost fainting with terror till the close of the service, when the multitude again pouring forth, carried her away in the stream; and she at length found herself beyond the precincts of the holy temple, and perceived her attendant anxiously looking out for her. She looked back;—the strange unknown was there,—step by step he followed, and what was her terror, when he actually entered the mansion of Madame Preysing, at the same moment! She proceeded rapidly along the staircase, reached the corridor, but the figure was still at her side. She stopt; she tried to speak; and fixing her eyes upon him, he threw aside his large cloak, and revealed the features of father Isidor. The sight of an assassin, with dagger in hand, had been more welcome to poor Catherine; for he had doubtless been a witness to her interview with the count; and he was the last being in the world, whose eye she could have borne at such a moment. He now fixed upon her a look of scrutiny, that seemed to read her soul; slowly shook his head, and in a calm voice, strangely contrasted with her perturbed spirit; "I am come," he said, "from the castle of Clamm;"

— an announcement that, giving a new direction to Catherine's ideas, enabled her to struggle with her feelings, and bear the keen, searching eye of the holy father.

"And how, then, is my dearest mother?" was her eager inquiry.

"I left the Baroness Volkersdorf well; and I am the bearer of her tender love. For myself, I am come to inquire into your affairs, and when you indulge the hope of returning to our convent. But we are here exposed to the cold air; you appear overcome,—I will attend you to your apartment;" and with an air of confidential mystery, he led her away. The moment of the dreaded confession was at hand; it was inevitable, and Catherine's suffering was extreme. She endeavoured to reach the apartment of Madame Preysing,—she must see her; but the priest, as if aware of her purpose, bade her domestic show them to that of Miss Volkersdorf; to leave the wax light, and to retire. He seated his pupil, more dead than alive, in a chair; taking another, he drew it close to hers, and again beckoning to the lingering attendant, alarmed at the deathly paleness of her young mistress, told her to be gone. After contemplating his victim for some time, satisfied of the powerful impression he had made,—the stern inquisition was commenced. If any thing could be a relief to Catherine at this time, it was, that it did not bear upon the interview she had just held with the count. In a solemn, but mild tone, father Isidor first spoke to her of her mother: and she sought to confine him to this topic, by making a thousand simple inquiries, interesting only to herself. But he saw and

defeated her object. Bringing her back, however, reluctantly to the point he wished, he required her to answer with sincerity, "if she were prepared to enter on her future holy life with becoming zeal; she was called to it; and her mother was exceedingly anxious on this head."

Catherine was confused and distressed; she answered, that she had lived as much as possible in retirement; nay, in solitude; — she had devoted herself to the perusal of serious works, — to religious contemplations; and that in this respect her conscience was free from any actual reproach. Yet this did not satisfy the priest; he would have a particular account of the different devotional exercises in which she had joined. In her replies, she failed to conciliate, or to come up to the mark to which his strange and captious questions tended. He saw clearly enough, that through all the secret confessions he extorted from her bosom, however pure and religiously inclined, there prevailed a strong feeling of aversion towards the deeply secluded existence, the many irritating and self denying acts, and wearying ceremonies which fill up the hours, days, and years, the lingering and living death, of a conventual life; and that so far from loving it the more by her occasional residence and trials, she thought with horror upon the lot to which she was condemned. His features grew darker and darker, as she proceeded: "And what," he interrupted her,—"what! young woman, will be the result, think you, of this palpable reluctance for the state to which you have been chosen? Do you imagine that wandering thoughts, and frivolous desires, the harsh fruit of a young untutor-

ed heart, — are to be allowed to dissolve a sacred engagement taken in the face of Heaven ?"

"Oh heavens ! have pity on me—do not talk thus sternly; it was not I, — indeed it was not I, who was destined to redeem such a vow; and I may look on myself in this respect as entirely free."

"And who taught you, young lady, to make these subtle distinctions ?" said the father, in an angry tone. "Dare *you* to question the Almighty's claim upon his erring creatures, and the sacrifices, it is his will, to exact ? Was Isaac consecrated to Heaven ? Was his father not bound to pay a debt to Heaven, as sacred as that which your mother has contracted for you ? God had given this offspring to Abraham's old age ; the happiness — the very existence of a long line of posterity rested upon the boy's life; yet Abraham hesitated not to comply with the will of God, and the gentle Isaac, young woman, resisted it not."

"That is true, holy father ; but God was then speaking to the patriarchs ; and in a language open to no doubts, or question."

"Ah ! and dream you, —a poor strayed lamb, — that ye may doubt ?" returned the father, half pitying, half scoffingly.

"No, good father, but it appears to me——"

"That thou art too worldly-minded and stubborn," interrupted he ; "and that you wish to sport your reason against your faith. Do you not tremble to oppose so frail a weapon, against the heavenly armour and the oracles of revelation ? Oh pride! oh folly! that first led to perdition, and will lead you, with infatuated millions, again. Why this reason is a feather, each one wears as it liketh him,

and blown about by every gust of passion,—the toy of our fancy, now caressed, now thrown aside, with every varying whim; and will you make that the arbiter of your duties, without regard to the eternal happiness of your mother and of yourself, in jeopardy by your silly arguments, because, forsooth, you will decide on the momentous question of the soul's salvation, or perdition?"

"Father!" replied Catherine, with more firmness than before, "your words would terrify me, did not my conscience assure me, you failed to appreciate my motives and feelings. I am sensible of the high importance,—the truth of what you advance; only this cannot apply to me; I do not obey the dictates of a fallacious reason, but of a voice you yourself must acknowledge as most sacred — the holy voice of conscience; — is it not that of God? It is that which tells me, I should commit sin to take the veil, while in my heart I feel such repugnance to it."

"What do I hear! my dear young lady," said the priest, in a more conciliatory, and even sorrowful, though austere tone. In what school have you been educated? Who has betrayed your fine understanding by such wicked sophisms, tempting your pure nature to deceive alike your God and yourself?"

"The whole is the result of my own reflection and solemn conviction, father; no other person is to blame; and, from all my most serious scrutiny, I find —"

"That it is more easy and agreeable to love the world, and comply with its desires, than to enter into heaven by the strait gate. But there is no

question here of further argument or exhortation; — the will of God — imperious necessity, too, must be obeyed, when the moment for pronouncing your vows shall arrive."

"That moment is not yet come," replied Catherine, with a calmness and firmness which astonished her, when she afterwards reflected upon the scene. "No, it is not come," she continued; "and, ere it do — we are, alas! such frail, wretched beings — no one can tell what Heaven may please to dispose — what —"

"Yes, you flatter yourself, some lucky circumstance will intervene; — that is your boasted reason which deceives you. I am shocked at the wilful progress you have made in worldly love, and a fall from heavenly things; — yet I wonder not, when you take a Count Zriny for your tutor; when you are fallen to that extreme, that you scruple not to make a place of assignation of the holy house of the eternal God!"

These words, pronounced in a voice of terrific denunciation, fell, like a thunder-bolt, on the wretched girl; her eyes sunk under his searching glance; and, for some time, she could not speak. At length, she stammered out — "You are aware, my father, of the intimate connection between the count and our family; and my sister's husband —"

"Your sister's husband! Are you credulous enough to believe that he is united by the marriage vow to Ludmilla?"

"I have no doubt of it; — my sister's own letters, and the count's own declaration —"

"Mere snares to catch fools! invented to smooth your poor mother's pillow ere she depart. Her

children have already nearly broken her heart. But it is better, perhaps, for you to go on, and deceive with these unfounded delusions — she cannot learn the truth; but for me, you must excuse my being a dupe to the fiction of your sister's marriage."

"What, then, do you think of my sister? — can you suppose her capable! — no, it is impossible!"

"And why? — *she* could surely venture to sacrifice her reputation, after sacrificing her own mother, and the salvation of her immortal soul. I tell you she is his mistress, and is considered such at Paris. She never resides with him; she bears not his name; yet allows herself to be supported in a most brilliant style."

Poor Catherine only hung her head, and wept; for she could not but feel, that what the priest said agreed too well with all she had heard at the opera; — she felt deeply humiliated, and could make no reply.

"Your sister's mansion," continued the cruel priest, "is the resort of all the free-thinkers, schismatics, and would-be philosophers,—with Huguenots, and all that tribe which haunt atheistical Paris; — pretty society for a young creature, dedicated, from her birth, to the holy service of the Lord! Her lover has no religion; he is in secret alliance with cursed Musselmans, the bitterest enemies of Christ; and he is ready, like a second Judas, to betray his master and his God into the hands of miscreants."

"Oh, indeed, holy father, you go too far!" cried Catherine, half indignant; "never will I believe Count Zriny capable of such a crime."

" And the seduction of a holy virgin devoted to Heaven! was not that a crime?" inquired the father, in a triumphant tone; " but I see you know nothing of the count, — you behold every thing through a false medium; if not, you would never have been guilty of the folly and audacity of giving him the meeting in a church. He has cast his fascinations round you, — you cannot judge of, or view him in his actual form."

" Nay, father, there you are wholly mistaken — indeed you are."

" I know you better than you do yourself; — he makes you think just as it is his pleasure. I tell you he has ruined your sister; and, mark me! he will ruin you too, and end with rushing into perdition with you both!" With these fearful words, father Isidor arose, and, wishing Catherine good night, recommended her to the care of Heaven; at the same time conjuring her to reflect on what he had said, and take heed how she trusted herself again in the presence of Zriny. " He would now go," he added, " to the convent of the Heaven-gate, and speak to the lady abbess respecting her taking the novice's veil, as soon as possible, to snatch her from the terrific lot which had befallen her unhappy sister."

CHAPTER XII.



The holy father had left Catherine in a state of indescribable distress. It was some time before she could sufficiently collect her spirits to reflect upon her strange, unhappy situation, and the still more serious one of her sister. Soon, she recollected the letter which the count had placed in her hands; she trembled to open it, after the dreadful description of him which she had just heard. What was her joy, to lay her hand then on a letter from Ludmilla herself, enclosed in another from Zriny, which contained the following words:

"When you, see this, my beloved sister, the writer of it will be far away; he, whose strange fate it has been, like that of all his unfortunate kindred, scarcely once to experience a brief truce, since he first hailed the light, to the bitter misfortunes that have assailed him. This it is, which has so long a period prevented his partaking of the society of a sister, to whom he is tenderly attached; who is the beloved one of his ever cherished, and excellent Ludmilla. An irresistible fate, has again

compelled your brother to quit Vienna, with all its brilliant connections, and you, my sweet sister, most deserving of all my regard. Alas! even a lot, more trying is reserved for me; I must leave the most precious bond of our union, the tender charge consigned me by Heaven; — ah! my Ludmilla, how shall I support existence without thee, the light and beauty of my dark and bewildered path. You, my Catherine, know my position, and can appreciate my motives; not like those narrow-minded beings who prefer their own happiness to the study of the general good. A life of despicable and ignoble ease, while our country and humanity groan under their sufferings, can never be the choice of a generous soul,—of souls like yours, and my Ludmilla's, which would scorn to check me in an useful and honourable career. When I shall have attained the goal,— when success shall have crowned my daring and long loved enterprise with the laurels of honour due to the saviour of his country; when outraged humanity, restored to its rights and its true dignity, shall grace his triumph; then will I turn to you, and say with pride, I have fulfilled the duty set me by my great task-master: let us now think of our own happiness. Ludmilla approves my views; her mind, at once noble and energetic, sacrifices her repose to the honour of a husband who appreciates all her worth. Spite of the envious malice, and folly of the world, she confides implicitly in my character; and you, my dear sister, to whom I dare not farther confide my sentiments on paper, you will rightly interpret and appreciate my motives. Let me hope that you will add something of the courage and energy of our beloved

Ludmilla, to your own pure mind and clear judgment. Let your heart, like hers, whisper gentle thoughts and feelings in my favour, and believe me wholly incapable of any meanness, of any action, which virtue would wish to disavow. Deny me not your friendship, forget me not.—Adieu!"

The confusion and peplexity of Catherine's mind after perusing this letter, mingled with anxiety and fear, deprived her of all power of thought. Notwithstanding its high flown enthusiasm, and enigmatical allusions, it still left an impression favourable to her sister's honour, that she was really the count's wife. She tried to rally her spirits, and to satisfy her doubts by perusing her sister's letter. Heaving a deep sigh, she opened it, and read as follows:

"You will receive these lines from the hand of him who is dearest to me upon earth. My husband promises me to see, and to give it you himself. Yes, you will see, and hear him speak, while to me that happiness, that one loved and supreme blessing, is snatched from me, Heaven only can tell for how long a time. What a cruel infliction, even at the very moment of our reunion! Absence and love like mine, appears like some frightful abyss, round which storm and darkness lower, and spectral forms of horrible and threatening meaning appal the eye. Ah, how happy was I once!—I cannot express how I then felt; and I yet am in the confidence of being beloved by the noblest of men, for Zriny still tenderly loves me; his passionate attentions, and even his jealous care, convince me of the delicious truth. But he is not like the vulgar herd of men; his daring and lofty spirit, cannot be

chained at the chariot-wheels of the base, time-serving world; he cannot live and breathe, and love and hate, as it requires of its feeble victims. I am no stranger to his opinions, his principles and his projects; my bosom is the depository of his secret hopes. He scorns to class me with the rest of my frail sex; his confidence has enabled, and given me courage and energy, even to struggle with his absence. Yes, could he require it of me, I think I could almost renounce him; but, no, I would not boast; I would not so far tempt the vengeance of Heaven. Although the world may scoff, and deceive itself, with false appearances, the better to win the worship of its idols, it cannot interrupt the bliss of our union; it cannot shake my conviction, that I possess his love, and that he ranks high above all other men. Yes, our union is indissoluble, our love is stronger than death! What then have we to fear, if we form each other's happiness; if we are above the world and its appearances, and indifferent as to the opinions it may entertain. I can suffer, or support, all that so base a world can inflict. If he only encourage me, I shall triumph, for to him does my heart, my very nature, and inmost hopes cling fast, as the flower to its native stem. Our marriage is yet a secret to the world, and so it must continue; but it is no mystery to you, my dearest, nor to our honoured mother, to whom I intreat you to communicate every thing you know. Do not, however, breathe a syllable to any other living being; and there is one in your house, whom I have reason to dread; his influence is without bounds, and it has already reached me.

"I could not hear without shuddering, that that

man had tried to extend his evil agency into my affairs. He has friends and connections at Paris, in part known to the count; and he has warned me to be upon the watch against the snares they may lay in my path. Yet, at this juncture, it is of the last importance that he should be considered unmarried, and I am fully aware of the motives for it. He is in need of all his natural advantages, his energy, his powers of persuasion, to accomplish the brilliant destiny to which he was born, and in which his consort and his whole family will participate. A time will come, when these apparent enigmas will be explained, and when his sister will occupy a rank and consideration, worthy of her high, confiding nature, envied by the world. Count Zriny will then stand fully justified in her eyes; in those of the public, and of his humiliated enemies. Till then we must suffer; but will not abate our confidence in his love. Let him dispose of me, as it may seem good; I know that his actions will result from a fine and great mind. Indulge no uneasiness, therefore, respecting me; pity me not, and let nothing from me pass your lips. Ask for my dear mother's blessing, for the girl once so dear to her; and, oh! forget not, to pray earnestly to God for me, if you think it can be of avail for one like me. Ah! how happy you are, if you can indeed pray with the same hope and faith, as once I did. With me, my former impressions of this kind, seem yielding to other thoughts; and fast fading away. A new and strange light appears to have risen over my darkened path; yet can I not decide hitherto, whether it hath sprung from a good or an evil source. The count has peculiar

ideas on the subject: with such a guide I cannot go wrong; and I follow in his steps. When happy, as we are in each other, all else appears simple, and easily explained. Since that blissful era, how many things have changed! our mutual love only continues the same. Adieu, my dearest;—Zriny presses to be gone: once more, farewell!

LUDMILLA, COUNTESS ZRINY."

If the language of the count's letter had perplexed poor Catherine's understanding, this completed the strange confusion of her mind. She could find nothing on which she could reason, or draw the least satisfactory conclusion, from expressions and opinions so very singular. She read again and again; but the only inference at which she could arrive, was the painful one, that her sister was any thing but really happy, and that she stood in a very dubious and critical position. Her suspicions of Zriny revived with additional force, and these, when coupled with Zriny's own words, the language of father Isidor, and popular rumours, presented a combination of evidence truly afflicting to reflect upon. One thing was but too clear; he had quitted her: and, with the reputation of an unmarried man, pursued his intriguing and dangerous career, possibly, as the wily priest suspected, in league with the enemies of his country. She saw her sister a prey to anxiety and terror, passionately attached to a wild and daring traitor, without the power or the wish to break so perilous a conneotion. Possessing an almost magic influence over the heart of woman; that over mankind, as in the instance of the emperor, appeared little

less than oracular; she could hardly then reproach, however she might pity Ludmilla, for the infatuated passion which she still imagined was so fervently returned. But what alarmed her most of all, was, the passage respecting the evil agency employed by the priest, for to him only could it allude. Were she really the count's wife, he was in a position to ascertain the fact; and Madame de Volkersdorf had, moreover, communicated to him every circumstance she knew relating to her daughter. The holy father, too, it was evident, had his eye on the count's secret movements: she was unable to penetrate their meaning, but the very mystery in which they were involved, gave them a more fearful aspect.

Her thoughts next turned to her cousin Sandor, whose presence, in such an hour, would have afforded her both support and consolation. He, she felt convinced, would not desert their cause in their most desolate day of tribulation. Yes, she would write to him; he would not see her immured alive in a convent, nor witness the bitter sacrifice of all her fondest hopes and wishes. But, alas! where was he to be found? and could she expect to hear from, or to see him, ere the dreaded scene were closed? As a last resource, then, she would address herself to her uncle at Presburg; he would hear from her in four-and-twenty hours. Yet she trembled to confide the secrets of Zriny either to Szlatinski or to M. de Ferronay, besides the danger of entrusting such information to the public post. What if, on the statement of these mere suspicions, her brother were to be arrested; how should she answer such a breach of confidence, either to him

or her more unhappy sister? While torn by these conflicting feelings, the voice of Julia, who appeared at the door, roused her from her fearful anticipations.

"Heavens! my love, what do you here?" exclaimed her kind friend; "all absorbed in darkness!—yes, and in tears, I vow! Quick, let us have lights—here is a letter for you."

"A letter!" exclaimed Catherine, in a tone of terror;—such had been the unhappy impression of those she had just read.

"Yes, a letter," continued her friend; "is there any thing so very terrible in that? The Polish envoy has just given it to my husband, with the request, that it may immediately be forwarded to you, my dear."

"And from Poland!" cried Catherine, fixing her eyes on the address, and blushing deeply, as she recognised the hand-writing. It was from Sandor Szlatinski, and the very first she had ever received from him. Julia cast a speaking glance at her young friend.

"Do you know that writing?" she inquired.

"It is my cousin's, Count Sandor Szlatinski."

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed Julia, laughing, "your cousin is doubtless going to initiate you into the secrets of modern diplomacy; he has immense influence at the Polish court. He was extremely urgent, I am told, that the letter should be put into your own hands, because, you know, it was an affair of state. Come, come, my pretty one, do not look so sweetly embarrassed; I know all. You are his little betrothed—at least in heart, I see; and every one agrees he is worthy of the highest

happiness he can attain. How you would have delighted to hear all the fine things which the ambassador said of him. Are they true?"

"Oh! yes. Sandor is so good, so loyal, so sensible, so—"

"So handsome, so brave, so amiable, so very loving, so beloved," ran on the laughing Julia; "all that is understood. What good quality can the man one loves, and by whom we are adored, ever want?"

"Now, Julia, you are quite mistaken," replied Catherine; "am I not going into a convent? Think what a frightful misfortune, to love under such circumstances;" and the wretched girl burst into tears. Julia threw her arms round her neck, and in the tenderest accents tried to re-assure her.

"Believe me," she said, "I know more of your affairs than you imagine. All is not lost; you have not yet taken the veil; a gallant cavalier is ready to die for you. He stands high in favour with the royal Sobieski; and you are well aware, that the nod of that great man—his mere wish, are now law. Courage, then, dear Catherine; trust your friends, and all will yet be well. Quick! read, and answer your terrible letter. Count Zalinski will take charge of it, for he both loves and esteems your absent cavalier."

Julia again embraced her young friend, who, half confused, half enraptured, could only shed tears of gratitude upon her bosom. She then entreated her to lose no time in writing to her cousin Sandor, and withdrew. How delicious, how strangely contrasted with those she had just indulged, were now the feelings of Catherine; she broke

the seal and hastily ran over the contents of her letter. It told her all that had occurred since their separation, and gave her renewed vows, and expressions of his attachment. He implored her to adopt no decided step unfavourable to their future happiness; promised to be soon with her, and free her from her threatened imprisonment. He doubted not of success, and by the same powerful influence, he could put in motion, to make her soon his gentle and adored companion for life.

Absorbed in the most delightful sensations, Catherine secretly vowed to give implicit obedience to the directions of her noble-minded lover. She sat down to assure him of it; she gave him a full account of her present situation, and sought to interest him in the misfortunes of her beloved sister. While occupied in writing, she recovered much of her usual calmness, and even gaiety of manner; then hastened to the apartment of Madame de Preysing, where Julia rallied and complimented her on the expedition she had used in replying to her lover.—Here let us leave her to enjoy her brief, but exstatic dream of love, with hope beckoning before, and friendship at her side; while we turn to the disastrous fortunes of her sister. Alas! she was no longer the happy being she had represented herself, absorbed in love, and giving life and joy to the circle in which she moved. One year had wrought a sad change in her destiny. She filled, indeed, the same brilliant station; she was the charming, the irresistible Madame de Villecamp; she was adored by all the men of wit in Paris; was the ornament of society, and gave the tone to fashion. But her peace of mind, the self-approving

happiness once hers, were fled for ever. The inebriation of passion, also, which marked the spring-tide of love, was gone. The romantic incidents of her elopement, and her no less strange wanderings through Hungary and Germany, the novelty of her singular position, with the sweet companionship of a man so passionately attached as the count had then been, had all united to keep her in a whirl of enchantment, the interest of which was passed away.

Zriny, to do him justice, had treated his lovely victim with all the respect and devotion of a true cavalier, added to the gallantry of a French courtier. He anticipated her slightest wishes, and he would have felt as much shocked, as herself, at the idea of compromising their mutual honour, and indulging their passion, ere it was consecrated by the rites of marriage. For the first time, Zriny felt the full force of a virtuous passion; it was now his ardent desire to form an union for life, with the charming Ludmilla. He respected his future wife, in the virgin purity of her he loved; and he even tore himself from her side on reaching Strasburg, to make known to his family the resolution he had taken to make her his, and at the same time to preserve the favour of the emperor. He was well received at court, and under some plausible plea, obtained permission to return immediately into Hungary. He flew on the wings of love to Munkats, to communicate to his sister and his brother-in-law, his approaching marriage; but the almost royal splendour which distinguished this house, the ambitious plans of Tökely, his sister Helena's pride, together with his own aspiring

nature, convinced him that it was no time to hazard such an avowal; that it would be more prudent to delay it till the period when its announcement would admit of no question as to the fact.

Meantime, Ludmilla, agreeably to his directions, had reached Paris. The society and manners then prevailing in the most cultivated and refined of European cities, soon wrought a complete change in the temperament and feelings, if not in the principles, of a young recluse. She lost all that constraint, and appearance of prudery, which rural retirement, and the air of a convent are apt to produce; these were replaced by a peculiar grace and elegance, combined with a seductive charm and animation of manners, which made her the idol of the circles in which she moved. Her understanding, and her naturally fine qualities, were now more fully developed and more highly cultivated.

When Count Zriny, after six months' absence, hastened to rejoin her, he found her transformed, as it were, into a new being. A delicate and graceful air, soft as the breath of spring, seemed to float around her; a gentle, captivating ease of manner, threw a charm over every gesture, word, and look; an intellectual refinement, which almost conveyed the idea, "that her body thought;" while her finely moulded form, more fully developed, and her striking and fascinating features, were farther relieved by a chastely appropriate, yet rich costume. These, combined with a look of dignity, which shone through her more attractive graces, rendered the impression of her beauty irresistible; while the animation of her conversation, and her manners,

was mingled with a tone of reflective and speculative reasoning, which presented a contrast the most piquant. There was an expression, too, of the utmost sweetness in her lips, and smile; and that of her dark blue eyes, had at once a fire and softness in it, which, contrasted with her black, finely arched eye brows, gave something extremely striking and commanding to her whole countenance.

Ludmilla, such as the count had left her at Strasbourg, would not so easily have succeeded in again captivating the volatile and handsome traveller, as the now brilliant Madame de Villecamp. During their separation, Zriny had seen much to influence a change in his opinions, by opening a new career for his ambition, and tempering the ardour of his passion. His eagerness to make her wholly his own, was no longer the aim of his life; but he now beheld her with a thousand new attractions, which relumed the ardour he had before felt for her. He again sighed to lead her to the altar; and he resolved to trample upon every obstacle to the accomplishment of his wishes. Ludmilla was cruelly disappointed, when made acquainted with the wishes he had formed to keep their intended union a profound secret. For a long time she would not listen to it; she imagined it was merely intended to try the strength of her attachment; for if real, she saw at once the extent to which her reputation must suffer, and she made the most earnest appeals, and even reproaches upon the subject. But the texture of his mind was of still stronger materials; and he maintained the absolute necessity there was, however trying to his feelings, for compliance with his wishes. He would glory, he said, in proclaiming her his wife,

before the highest and proudest in the empire,—and that period would soon come; but at the present moment, his engagements with the emperor, his country, his family, all imposed upon him the painful duty of sacrificing both hers, and his own wishes.

From whatever motive the count acted, he could not, in thus frankly coming forward, be charged with hypocrisy or deceit. His vanity, excited by continued success, and the ambition of Tökely, had led him to form other opinions, if not other principles, whether erroneous or otherwise, which led to the conclusion, that his family and himself were specially called upon to deliver their country from the Austrian yoke,—borne with indignation,—and to restore her to the rank of an independent nation, of which he would become the head.

Still his gratitude to the emperor gave rise to a cruel conflict in his mind; and it was only in ceaseless activity and travel that he could find some respite from the anxiety it caused him. His highly cultivated mind, and his powers of pleasing, made his society courted by the most distinguished of his contemporaries; and the women were, in particular, attracted by his fine person, and engaging manners. To Ludmilla alone was due the triumph of having fixed one of the most volatile of men, and she equally felt his power; and from their first meeting, that mutual passion took its origin, which exerted so powerful an influence over their lives. After many conflicts between a sense of love and honour, she was induced to give her consent to a secret union, without aspiring to make public her title to be received as Countess de Zriny. At the

same time, she insisted, most strenuously, on her duty, of revealing it to her mother and sister in perfect confidence; for, injured and afflicted as they felt, she conceived it to be part of the reparation she owed them, to convince them that she had not really dishonoured their good name. The count was here compelled to yield; and this it was,.which enabled her to support her equivocal position with so much fortitude. She looked forward to the joyous and triumphant moment, when the veil of mystery would be torn aside; when, rising superior to the envy and calumnies of the world, she should avow her rank, and partake in all her consort's honours and success.

THE

SIEGE OF VIENNA.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Count Zriny, proud of having carried his point, made instant preparations for his marriage. Excepting its secresy, every thing was conducted in the most formal and regular manner, authentic proofs of its celebration being preserved. This was the happiest period of Ludmilla's life; she was united to a man who adored her; she lived only for him, and it even gave a fresh zest to her happiness, that they preserved the knowledge of it exclusively for each other. Their brief separations also, gave additional bliss to the hours in which they met. But the count's spirit was not one that could submit to restraint; his manner betrayed the excess of his passion for Madame de Ville-

camp, his jealous care, and the rights of a sanctioned lover. She lived in a style of splendid gaiety; the count's fortune, favoured as he was by the emperor and his family, supplying every elegance and luxury she could desire. Her *soirées* were the most brilliant, and most frequented by rank, science and wit, of any in Paris. The handsome Hungarian lord, was, also, the theme of every tongue; for if the small minority of women of strict principle held aloof, there was no want of wit and talent, where a Molière, Racine, Quinault, Boileau, and others, made their favourite resort;—no want of taste and fashion where the ever youthful Ninon, and Montespan, and De la Valliere had maintained their syren sway. The respect entertained for the taste and understanding of woman, and the pleasure derived from an equal and liberal intellectual intercourse between the sexes, presented something extremely novel and engaging to the imagination;—a school of true courtesy and manners, in which mind was cultivated; the art of being animated and witty without pedantry; gay without licentiousness; gallant without folly; the best of all that distinguished Parisian society at that period, and gave to courtesy and good breeding the weight of law.

With intelligence and spirit above her sex, Ludmilla entered into all the views and projects of her husband, evincing a sagacity, and a correctness of judgment which astonished, and by giving him a still higher opinion of her talent and genius, created a new bond of attachment, which gave her a firmer hold on his ambition than on his tenderness and respect. He consulted her, with advantage,

upon the situation of his country, her hopes of independence, and even the severe conflict he suffered between his attachment to the emperor and his patriotic engagements. She was proud of the confidence thus reposed in her; and to be the companion — the chosen wife of such a man, was esteemed by her the very highest earthly happiness that could be conferred upon her. It was the same with regard to all other subjects, whether philosophical or religious; at a period, too, when the old regime under Louis XIV. was already beginning to feel the effects of the new system advocated by the *Esprits forts*, whose bold and speculative writings ushered in the new and terrific age of infidelity and revolution. Count Zriny was no unapt disciple of this school; he soon united in the views of its professors to establish the sway of reason, upon the ruins of established creeds and ancient usages.

It was long, however, before the pure, religious mind of Ludmilla, impressed as it had been from maternal precept, education, principle, and habit,—by the great truths and hopes of revelation,—could be induced to listen to the evil suggestions of her husband. But love and ambition had prepared the way; and so blind and infatuated had she become, by worldly appeals, and insidious compliments to her genius and powers of reasoning, that ere long, she began to vie with the most subtle and daring partizans of the new philosophy. She shone, indeed, for a season; but there would seem to be a luminous point, beyond which neither fashion nor wit will support their votaries; that point she had reached; her star began to wane; and the black spot of cloud rose visibly in the distant horizon,—the

herald of approaching storm and darkness. The first symptom appeared in the restlessness and anxiety of the count's manner, and his incessant desire of occupation in affairs of moment. He had arrived at Paris on a mission from the emperor, of a difficult and confidential nature; and this had furnished him with a pretext of remaining there, near her he loved, without exciting suspicion. He had, indeed, purposely prolonged the negociation; but he soon received orders for pressing the affair, at a moment when he was engaged in the most important of his intrigues, with regard to Hungary. The decisive moment drew nigh; he received secret despatches from Tökely and other conspirators, and an emissary was at length announced from Constantinople.

The count, in short, found himself involved in a labyrinth of mystery and peril of no ordinary kind. The nearer the crisis, the more abstracted, the more immersed in business did he become, so as almost to deprive Ludmilla of his society. When she gently reproached, he did not conceal that he felt the greatest degree of interest in his public career; that man was born for action, and that he should think himself highly culpable, if he neglected to exert all his faculties in the service of his country, placed, as he was, by birth and character, foremost in the eyes of that country, amidst the most eventful changes, which called for the greatest courage and prudence.

Ludmilla's enthusiasm sympathized in all the count's views; but she felt cruelly the deprivation of his usual attentions and animated society. This was little, however, to the severe trial which await-

ed her, when Zriny, even at her own parties, displayed those varied powers of pleasing he possessed in favour only of other women. His conversations, with her, were now wholly confined to matters of state, the new projects of Tökely, his relations with the court of Vienna, and the discontents which prevailed in Hungary. She became instantly aware that he had ceased to love her, and that she could in future only aspire to his friendship. Of the value of this, she was fully sensible; but it was not enough for an impassioned being, who had sacrificed every thing for him. She had too much judgment to reproach him; too much pride to show how much she suffered; and as she had consented that their union should remain secret, she resigned herself to her lot. She hoped this appeal to his generosity would be felt, and thus by exciting his esteem, in some degree win back his love. Indeed, she was not wholly disappointed; the count felt the extreme delicacy of her conduct, and some shadow of his former ardour seemed to re-appear. It was, however, only the illusion of the moment; business and pleasure soon resumed their wonted empire, till at length indifference was followed by estrangement, and the unhappy wife could only weep in secret.

With love and happiness disappeared, also, the vivacity and vigour of character which had hitherto sustained her. She grew silent and reserved; her health, and even her beauty participated in the change; the paleness of her cheek, and her tear-dimmed eye, gave mournful witness how deeply she felt the loss of a husband's love. The count saw it, and his conscience told him the cause;

but he only accused his evil star, which condemned him to plunge into the midst of intrigues and dangers, which destroyed the happiness of all connected with him. He even confessed as much; and with a worn heart, and broken spirit, she had yet sufficient resolution to adopt a course which should put an end to the cruel anxieties of her consort.

One day, when more absorbed than usual, his head resting upon his hand, and occasionally uttering deep sighs, she began the subject by inquiring, if he had not received any letters that day?

"I expected some from my brother Emmerich, at Munkats; and I am uneasy; they relate to important business."

"Tökely, then," replied his wife, "has resolved on throwing himself on the protection of Turkey?"

"It is the only resource he has left; he has gone too far, and his designs are too clearly seen through, to leave room for retreat. A war between the emperor and our country is unavoidable."

"What!" exclaimed Ludmilla; "and you join in it? you oppose the emperor, who loves you, like a son? to whom he gives all his confidence!"

"There is the bitter sting! it is that which tortures,—which like a curse pursues me. I was born to make every one miserable, who has the least affection for me."

"Leopold, however, cannot yet complain of you. You have transacted his affairs with perfect fidelity."

"But with what intent?" inquired the count;

"how long will it continue. The Grand Vizier is assembling his army; and decisive events are at hand."

"And you here, count!—gloomy, irresolute, and inactive!"

Zriny cast a glance of astonishment at his lady; he had not been prepared for such a question: "What mean you, Ludmilla?—to what can you allude?" he inquired carelessly.

"I mean," she continued, "that if you were on the scene of action,—if you were witness to the progress of events, and could participate in them—"

"Can I?" exclaimed Zriny, starting with mingled impatience and vexation; "does not duty bind me here—fixed to the spot?"

"To the emperor, no doubt; but that is fast drawing to a close. You can end it, as it was your own proposing, and set out when you please."

"What would come of it all?—what should I gain by it?"

"You would be free, Zriny," replied his noble wife—"free to go wheresover ambition and your destiny may call. Mere diplomatic trifles are here absorbing all your valuable time;—hasten into Hungary, and resume your wonted activity."

"Into Hungary!" he repeated, in a tone of the utmost surprise. The fatal word had passed her lips: she, who loved so tenderly, so passionately, had pronounced a decree of banishment against all which bound her most fondly to life.

"I said Hungary," continued Ludmilla, with as much calmness as she could command; "your

presence is wanted; you can there pursue the career marked out for you. Tökely is about to reap the fruit of all his exertions; the Grand Signor will make him Prince of Hungary, and hoist the standard of national freedom. You have done much for him; and more remains yet to be done in Hungary; the commander of the Ottomans now eagerly expects it — you know it."

"I have no ambition to pay my respects to a barbarian."

"I believe it — I am glad of it," replied Ludmilla, with unaffected dignity. "It is not that; but for the interests of your family — for the elevation of your house. You must make use of him as the necessary instrument of your ambition, whatever may be your opinion of him as a barbarian."

"I understand you, my Ludmilla; I do justice to your greatness of mind; yet how — you wish me to go — that I cannot comprehend —"

"I only advise you, dear count, to do what your own genius dictates."

Zriny bent down his head without making any reply, for his conscience smote him. Her generosity, her devotedness, her last proof of it, were a tacit reproach he could ill bear. His wife, too, was silent, and sighed deeply; for she had just made a sacrifice that cost her very dear. Still she felt a just pride in having thus triumphed over her heart, after the severe conflicts it had lately endured.

"We must think of all this," said the count, much moved; at the same time rising and tenderly embracing the gratified Ludmilla. The ice

was now broken; and the decisive step once taken, she thought she should suffer less than before. The count, on his part, had too much delicacy of sentiment, as well as too much sagacity, not to be aware he stood in a less dignified position than his wife. He felt humbled; he knew how much he had sacrificed, and the manner in which he had repaid all her tenderness and care. Still he bore too good an opinion in his own eyes, not to justify his conduct; while the calmness of her manner, in leaving him free to pursue his ambitious projects, inspired him with the idea that she no longer loved him. In this belief he tried to impose upon his better judgment, and, by one false step, he thus involved himself in a labyrinth of error. Too proud to reproach her for withdrawing her affections, he entered into no explanation; he resumed his public engagements with redoubled activity, and soon acquainted her with his resolution to adopt the excellent advice she had given him. Ludmilla preserved the same impenetrable calmness and dignity of manner; but it was the calmness of a broken spirit; and she saw him take his departure for Vienna, at the close of the carnival, with a desolation of feeling that whispered she would never see him more. He, too, was deeply affected; but he did not conceal it, for he was preparing to throw himself upon a stormy current of events, the perils of which he well knew by the fate of his father. He was preparing also to proclaim himself a traitor to the most confiding of monarchs, — to the best of benefactors; to abandon her, whom he had seduced from the bosom of a fond and attached family, to the care of strangers in a foreign soil.

He took his leave, therefore, with feelings of real sorrow, and which left with him a strange presentiment of some fearful calamity which would, ere long, overtake him.

The count was fully aware that he should meet his sister-in-law at Vienna; and he was the bearer of many sad and heart-boding assurances of affection from his unhappy wife, for the gentle and lonely Catherine. No sooner was he out of sight, than the wretched Ludmilla gave vent to her long-represt agony in a passion of tears,—for she also indulged a strange misgiving of some evil at hand; while the tenderness and sorrow he had expressed on his departure, gave added poignancy to the sacrifice she had made, and re-awakened all the passionate agitation of her first love.

On his arrival in the capital, the count was in no haste to discover the gentle Catherine; for how should he explain his conduct, the motives of his journey, and the objects he had in view. He had, besides, enough to occupy his attention at court. The public entertainments given to the Polish envoy, offered a fine field, in which to show his peculiar accomplishments and address, and thus disguise the nature of his political proceedings. With the same view, he affected to aspire to the hand of the wealthy Countess of C——; and this, he conceived, would silence the reports, already spread abroad, concerning his real marriage; not that for a moment he harboured the idea of abandoning his wife, but it was his policy to stand in the most commanding position he could assume in the eyes of his family. His sister Helena, whose wealth had been an inexhaustible source to promote his

views, had long indulged the wish of beholding his union with the daughter of a reigning prince in the immediate vicinity; and all that seemed wanting was the count's own consent.

On the evening of meeting Catherine at the theatre, it was his object, if possible, to avoid every appearance of countenancing the public rumour; and he accordingly studiously forbore to accost her, though he had resolved to see her in private. He had just received a letter from his brother-in-law, Tökely, which urged him to set out for Munkats with the least possible delay; and he had simply time to hold a brief interview with Catherine in the church. Under some plausible pretext, he obtained permission from the emperor to proceed to Prague; for it was his policy to reach the boundaries of Transylvania, and the fortress of Munkats, as soon as he could. It required the utmost caution to screen his movements, for he had latterly perceived that all his actions had been watched with prying care. He felt as if he were in the toils, surrounded by invisible spies, and by false friends, ready, at the given signal, to betray him. He travelled, therefore, to Munkats with incredible speed, determined to carry the grand project of his country's independence, at every hazard, into immediate effect.

Meantime, Catherine had been again exposed to the dreaded persecution of father Isidor, who insisted, under pain of inflicting her mother's curse upon a disobedient child, on having admittance to her whenever he pleased. He announced, with an air of satisfaction, that he had spoken with the lady abbess, who had stated that every thing would

be arranged for her taking the veil in the lapse of a very few weeks. These tidings acted as a severe shock upon Catherine; but she had now, by dint of reflection and knowledge of the world, acquired greater command over her feelings, and sought to conceal her sense of the power exercised by the priest over her thoughts and feelings. She merely aimed at delaying the evil hour, raising objections from the peculiar state of public affairs; and confiding in events, and to a secret determination of opposing all her energy, at the last stage of such a misfortune, to snatch herself from so hated a lot. Father Isidor, however, had greater penetration, and more means at his command than his intended victim. He combated all her reasoning, and, with admirable sophistry, converted it even into arguments against herself. He declared that the approaching crisis formed one of the very strongest inducements why she should seek an instant asylum from worldly dangers, by devoting herself to the service of Heaven. He entreated her to be convinced that no human power could interfere with the execution of her mother's design; that it had been ordained on high; that she had no resource but meekly to submit; and that neither her once-betrothed cousin, nor any of the friends who surrounded her, could place any obstacle to the speedy consummation of her mother's and his own wishes. With the same calm and resolute air, he at length prepared to take his leave, declaring that he was constrained to set out instantly from Vienna; but that on his return, he would not delay to pay her a fatherly visit in her convent. He also expressed his regret that he should be unable to

be present at the holy ceremony; on which Catherine entreated that he would give himself no uneasiness on that point, as she would gladly, with his consent, defer the hour of taking the veil until his return.

"That is impossible," replied the priest, in a decided tone; "there must be no question of it; not a moment is to be lost; each hour is fraught with your eternal weal or woe; and, ere long, you will have cause to bless me for this decision, when, within the sacred walls, you hear the tempest of war raging from without — a fearful war, of which the sullen and not distant murmurs fall on mine ear, and its gathering clouds darken all the sky."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Catherine; "is there any thing new — more terrible?"

"Yes; what I predicted to your mother, months ago, will soon be fulfilled. The hour is at hand, when your proud brother-in-law (how you should feel humbled at his being such), will proclaim his treason at the head of rebels and traitors."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Catherine, "do you think it possible?"

"It is beyond a doubt," continued the father; "but you cannot, or rather will not, comprehend what I say; you will soon hear, however, of strange events, when I shall have the consolation of reflecting, that you are placed beyond their sinister influence." The last words he pronounced in a milder tone, and recommending her to do all, to merit the blessing of God, which he then gave her, left her in a state of grief and agitation, which she no longer sought to repress.

Nor were the warnings of the priest without

foundation; the most alarming rumours, like the precursors of some great public calamity, disturbed the mind and the imagination of all ranks. The lady of Dunerwald, daily heard something which showed the imminency of the crisis at hand. The last hope of conciliating the existing differences between Austria and the Sublime Porte, had disappeared; the alliance between Poland and the emperor, had exasperated the sultan, without dismaying him; and his warlike preparations were pressed with redoubled activity. The grand vizier was at Adrianople, assembling an army exceeding half a million, and of which the courage and ferocity were loudly bruited, as too overwhelming for the forces of Austria and Germany successfully to oppose. The brief interval of its marching, and that of its arrival under the walls of Vienna, had been calculated with well-founded cause of apprehension and terror.

The discontents in Hungary, the boldness of Tökely's preparations, and the suspicious conduct of Count Zriny, added greatly to the extent of the danger, while the resolution of the insurgents showed the doubt and indecision of the imperial government.

These fearful tidings soon reached the ear of Catherine, giving fresh poignancy to her other sorrows, while they convinced her of the truth of all the holy father had advanced, and gave her a high idea of his political sagacity and knowledge of the enemy's designs.

Meantime, the spring approached; the Ottoman troops were preparing to advance, and all accounts agreed in stating, that he limited his ambition to

nothing less than the destruction of the capital itself. At this moment an ordinance from the emperor, to repair and strengthen the whole fortifications of the city, which still retained marks of the siege in 1529, by the Sultan Solyman, excited general consternation. The entire peasantry, for a wide circuit round the capital, were summoned to assist; magazines were established, and the national forces of every class, placed on the highest footing, so as to indicate the approach of extreme danger. Such was the public alarm, that all common individual interest, seemed to be lost sight of; preparations for Catherine assuming the veil, were forgotten in the march of events, which shook the monarchy to its foundations, and threatened the existence of Christianity in Europe.

Catherine, thus relieved from the terror of a convent, was a prey to apprehensions scarcely less terrible. Without any defined idea of the real horrors of a siege, she had yet heard enough at Madame Preysing's, to comprehend that it brought in its train a series of strange calamities. These were now on the eve of being felt; and fearful as they were, suspense and apprehension dilated their gigantic forms to an indefinite extent. The most incredible things were repeated for truth; and each citizen took measures for his own safety, according to the prevailing rumour of the hour. Numbers fled from the open country into the towns, others sought an asylum in the mountains, or the deepest valleys: that horrible confusion, caused by terror, was every where apparent, and there were few exempted from its baneful sway. Madame de Preysing was one; her confidence in God, her ex-

perience and firmness, enabled her not only to support herself, but to assist her friends and connections, by her judicious advice. She at once showed the absurdity and frequent contradiction of those popular reports, which produced so much alarm and mischief in the city. Her mansion was the resort of all who were in doubt, in what way to act,—whether to remain in the city, or to withdraw in haste to some far retreat.

"What!" she would exclaim with noble dignity, "do you think, that, once masters of Vienna, the Turks will not reach you, and be masters every where? Your sole hope is to conquer; and not to fly. Has not an Arabian necromancer predicted, that the grand vizier would penetrate even to the capital of Christianity itself; and is not that the great object of the Ottoman chief? If, therefore, the united forces of the empire, with the aid of the gallant Poles, succeed not in checking his fierce career, where can we promise ourselves safety, with more reason than within these walls?"

"What a dreadful prophecy!" exclaimed all those who heard it, seizing on the idea, instead of being impressed with the advice she had given them.

"No prophecy at all!" replied Madame de Preysing, "unless you believe in the religion of the infidels;—that God will abandon us, and that we fight not under the standard of our divine faith. Heaven hath already preserved the house of Austria from great perils, even when all human efforts appeared to be vain. It is not the first time Vienna has sustained a siege: the famous Solyman, who made the Christian world tremble at his name, left the flower of his mighty armies, sacrificed be-

neath its walls. Why then are we to despair? When the emperor Ferdinand was besieged in his palace by the rebels of Bohemia, and when just on the point of subscribing to their demands, came not Dampierre's regiment at the precise moment? Has not God almost miraculously granted his protection in far more critical times?"

"But perhaps," interrupted one of the ladies, "the period for our punishment has now arrived; who knows if Heaven will deign to help us more?"

"In that case, we are in his hands," replied the undaunted woman; "besides, I rely also on human assistance, directed by his wisdom; for we know the immense amount of the imperial armies; the formidable preparations of the Polish king; those of the electors of Saxony and Bavaria, headed by the valiant Duke of Lorraine, one of the greatest warriors of his age. I value at little, the presumed superiority of the Turks, and I am determined to remain where I am."

It was in vain, however, she sought to infuse the same courage and confidence she herself felt, into weak and frivolous minds. At the first untoward report, they fell into the same anxiety and despair, with the exception of Catherine, who was worthy, in every way, of her high-minded friend, and appreciated all the excellences of her character.

Meantime, the activity and the severity, which characterized the public measures of defence, in no way served to allay the general excitement. Count Stahremberg was appointed commander of the city, and he was indefatigable in his duties, visiting every point of defence. He allowed nothing to deter him, and even commanded such of the build-

ings as interfered with his plans, to be instantly razed to the ground. The unhappy owners were seen traversing the streets, and uttering cries of despair. Others were surrounding his mansion, beseeching him to countermand his orders, and at least, to spare the dwellings which afforded an asylum for themselves and their children. The count lamented the necessity he was under, promised indemnity, but failed not to persevere in his public duty. While thus engaged, Emmerich Tökely was little less active on his side, in favour of his ally, the sultan. He arrived at Buda, with his beautiful consort, Helena, and a princely retinue. It was very generally rumoured, that he would be proclaimed king of Hungary, under the protection of the Porte, on the fall of Presburg and Vienna; in return for which Tökely had promised to attend the grand vizier in his expedition, to make himself master of the Roman capital. With these proceedings, the name of his brother, Count Zriny, was invariably associated; and it was even added, that he had suggested the idea of Tökely mounting the throne of Hungary: with this, it was supposed, was connected his frequent journeys to Paris, to Munkats, and even to Constantinople; and that he entertained the idea of succeeding his brother-in-law, already far advanced in life, as king of the Hungarians. Moreover, it was asserted, that he aspired to the hand of the daughter of the Hospodar of Wallachia, counting upon the support of that prince. Catherine was exceedingly distressed by accounts like these. She did not, indeed, believe Zriny capable of so dark a crime, as that of giving his hand to another, while her sister lived; but she was fearful, lest the strange

disinterestedness and generosity of Ludmilla's character, might lead her to sacrifice her happiness and honour, to the ambitious views of one for whom she had already forfeited her reputation, the society of her family, and her religious destination. She knew the extent of Zriny's influence, and the strange fascination of his manners. While absorbed in these gloomy anticipations, in regard to the fate of her sister, Catherine had still the consolation of receiving accounts from her cousin, Sandor, with assurances of his unaltered esteem and attachment. They gave her, also, a perfect view of the state of public affairs, the warlike preparations of his sovereign, King Sobieski, and the secret correspondence of him, whose character she was just considering, and which daily excited fresh public attention. It seemed as if the emperor alone refused to believe him unworthy of his confidence. He had a sincere regard for him; and Zriny, spite of his ambitious projects, felt towards his sovereign, the warmest gratitude; loaded, as he had been, with favours, although the son of a traitor. He had been restored to his hereditary rank and property; he enjoyed the personal affection of his master,—at once gratifying to his pride and to his best feelings. Hence arose the continual struggle he maintained between his ambition and his loyalty to the most generous of masters, and which kept his mind in a state of continual unhappiness and excitement. Vainly had Zriny's enemies sought to prepossess the monarch against his favourite; he delighted in his company and conversation, renewing, as it were, the idea of his own youth, while listening to the strange incidents of his life and his travels.

He attributed all their attacks to envy, and even the representations of his most confidential advisers, were treated with ridicule or neglect. One of Zriny's most determined adversaries was Count Stahremberg, whose austerity and correctness of feeling was scandalized by the levity with which the young statesman treated the most serious affairs. Animated, also, as Stahremberg and his whole family had ever been, by sentiments of loyalty and devotion to the House of Austria, he was strongly impressed with the extent of the perils which surrounded Leopold, and regretted to see him repose such unlimited confidence in the son of the traitor Zriny the friend of Tökely,—and the brother of Tökely.

At this period, a messenger arrived with tidings from Hungary. The emperor was engaged inspecting the labours of the governor for the defence of the city, attended by him and General Rabatta, commissary of the army, and the pious and equally undaunted bishop Collonitz. They were deliberating on the details to be observed in the approaching siege, and the best plans for obviating the defects too observable both in the garrison and the armies. Stahremberg required the demolition of several houses situated upon the ramparts, and which stood in the way of his proposed works. The emperor, however, swayed by his respect for private property, appeared unwilling to consent.

"It is a severe measure, I admit," said the commander; "but it is indispensable."

"Gently, my dear Stahremberg," replied the emperor, "the danger is not so very pressing, and only absolute necessity can authorize such an act.

I cannot consent to inflict so much suffering upon my unhappy subjects."

"I fear," returned Stahremberg, "lest, very soon, it may be too late."

"And that, occupied with other affairs," continued Rabatta, "there may no longer be any time."

"No, no," replied the emperor, "it will always be time enough to proceed to these extremities, when we hear of the Turks at Presburg."

"Your majesty is always too good, too indulgent," said Stahremberg.

"What say you!" returned Leopold: "it is a matter of simple justice. I say I will not oppress my subjects; let us talk of something else."

Stahremberg bit his lips, and uttered not a word more.

"It is indeed, to be regretted," observed the worthy bishop, "that such harsh measures are necessary; but, permit your ancient servant, sire, to say, that many threatening circumstances which now surround us, might have been prevented, had a just severity been earlier employed. For instance, in regard to that firebrand of war—Tökely — what indulgence has been shown him!"

"Because he has had so good an advocate," interrupted Stahremberg, "with his majesty; it is no way astonishing, when his brother-in-law enjoys the favour of the highest authority in the land."

"What you have said, is bold indeed," exclaimed the bishop; "but it is no less true. Too long, sire, have your most zealous and faithful servants witnessed, in silence, the extent of a confidence so dangerous."

The emperor's cheek, though in general very pale, was now slightly flushed; and, turning towards the bishop, he said in a tone of reproach—"and you, too, Collonitz?"

"I am a servant of the church, sire, and, consequently, a minister of peace. It is my sacred duty, nevertheless, as a citizen, to intreat your majesty to banish from your august presence the Count Zriny,—to close, for ever, your ear to his perfidious insinuations."

"And who told you," retorted the emperor, quickly, "that I gave ear to any one's insinuations?—God be praised! we have still the use of our faculties, so far as to walk with our eyes open, listen to good counsel, and to act on our own authority."

"Grant me pardon, sire," said Collonitz, with profound humility; "if zeal for your sacred person, and my country, hath drawn from my lips any unbecoming expression, it was my wish to explain that Count Zriny boasts the entire confidence of your majesty, without, perhaps, deserving it."

"Zriny owes all he has in the world to my favour," interrupted his majesty; "I took him from the scaffold, where his father had justly suffered; I restored him to life, rank, and honour; he is my creature. How, then, can I think ill enough of human nature, to believe that this young man will prove ungrateful, much less a traitor, such as you would insinuate."

"Far be it from me," replied the bishop; "the crime of treason is of so black a dye, that we should deal with it only by proofs; we, therefore, impute it not to the count. But every one who hath your

majesty's honour at heart, cannot see, without concern, the member of a suspected family near your royal person in moments so critical."

"And one," observed Stahremberg, "who gives us so much reason for suspicion, no less on account of his family connections than his secret proceedings. For instance, when he requested permission from your majesty to go to Prague, under pretence of attending to his private affairs, he is known to have proceeded direct to Munkats, and even to the camp of the grand vizier. Thence he will depart for Constantinople, as I am well informed, and I can give your majesty my written authority on this point."

Leopold made no reply; his countenance assumed a darker and more severe expression; and, apprehensive they had gone too far, his ministers said no more.

"Speak out! say what you please," resumed the emperor; "but you cannot shake my confidence in this young man.—Let him go to Munkats, or to Constantinople, I shall regard him in the same light, till I receive actual proofs." As he said this, voices were heard in a loud tone, in the ante-chamber; the master of the ceremonies appeared at the door of the cabinet, and begging pardon for interrupting the conference, announced the arrival of Count Zriny, who claimed his privilege as Lord Chamberlain, to have instant access to his majesty. Leopold fixed a stern eye upon Stahremberg, who stood in an attitude of unfeigned astonishment, on learning so unanswerable a refutation of all that he had just asserted.

"Let Count Zriny wait the close of the confer-

ence," replied the emperor; "but not leave the ante-chamber."

Without further allusion to the subject, the emperor then resumed the discussions of the council, which he despatched with a more calm and cheerful air. He was, indeed, highly pleased with the vindication thus brought about by his favourite in person, and hastened to dismiss his ministers, that he might welcome the arrival of his young friend. He himself opened the adjoining door, and the count, with expressions of the liveliest emotion, threw himself at the monarch's feet. Affected with these marks of respect and attachment, the emperor, with an air of perfect confidence and regard, raised him up, observing: "Calm yourself, my young friend; rise and let us converse, for I am really glad to see you."

"My noble, my gracious sovereign!" exclaimed Zriny, as he tried to rise, but actually trembling with the violence of his feelings.

"What is the matter, Zriny? you seem agitated:—whence come you now?" inquired the emperor, recalling to mind his conversation with Count Stahremberg.

"I am only this moment arrived;—I have not even had time to dress—I have traversed two hundred leagues in three days,—I have posted night and day."

"How! came you not from Prague?" asked the monarch in a sterner tone. He was evidently both startled and displeased.

"I come now from Adrianople, sire; I have seen the grand vizier."

"The—what—grand vizier!" stammered out

the emperor, in a voice of painful surprise; fixing his eye at the same time on those of the count.

"Pardon, sire, if I have been too rash; if, on my own suggestion, I adopted such a measure without your majesty's concurrence; but the extreme urgency of the occasion, and my solicitude for your service, must plead in my behalf." Here his voice faltered, his face grew deadly pale, and he pressed his forehead with one hand; while with the other he supported himself against the back of a chair.

"You are ill!" cried the emperor, in a voice of alarm; "sit down, I entreat you;" at the same time he rung the bell with violence. "Bring some water, and cordials, on the instant," he cried to the page in waiting. He then ordered the count's neck-kerchief to be loosened, to prevent him, if possible, from falling into a swoon. By these means he was soon restored, and, raising his eyes, thanked his royal master, with a look of gratitude he could not mistake. Still his agitation continued, even greater than before. He tried in vain to conceal it.

"What can have happened to you, my friend?" inquired the emperor, when the pages had retired; "or are you really so ill?"

"No, no, my too excellent and indulgent master; the fatigue of so quick a journey, with the importance of all I have to reveal to your majesty; —this it is which has so strangely affected me."

"Well, then, speak out — what have you been doing with the grand vizier? — what induced you to visit his camp?"

"It was my own act, sire. Having despatched

my own affairs at Prague, I received a letter from my sister, which caused me to hasten to Munkats." — The emperor's brow grew clouded, and Zriny paused.

"Go on," said the emperor, somewhat drily.

"My sister Helena, sire, was desirous of seeing me, before the war broke out. I complied with her wishes; she is my only sister; and I was about to take leave of her — perhaps for ever." Zriny paused; his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Come, to the point!" exclaimed the emperor, half angry, half affected.

"It was then," resumed the count, with more firmness, "I began to reflect upon the horrors of a war which threatens to devastate Hungary, my country; to plunge her in civil war, whether the Porte succeed or not."

"What say you!" exclaimed the emperor, in a severer tone; "know you not the guilt of indulging any hope of advantage, on the part of our enemies?"

"Yes, sire, I know the duty of a subject; I know that my fortunes, my rank, my very existence, depend upon your majesty: I am deeply sensible of all my obligations; but, sire, Hungary, Transylvania, are become estranged from your majesty's allegiance; for the injustice and oppression every where inflicted, in your majesty's name, are never permitted to reach your royal ear."

"What mean you?" asked the emperor, in an angry tone.

Count Zriny again threw himself at his master's feet. Here he depicted, with warm emotion, the sufferings of his country; the corruption and the cruelty of the imperial agents; and the dangerous

state of affairs; that, in short, rather than submit to such oppression, the whole nation was determined to throw itself upon the protection of the Porte.

"Upon the protection of infidels;—the sworn enemies of Christianity, and of my house! Can you mean that?"

"Sire! despair alone, can drive a nation to such bitter extremity, or expect pardon from the magnanimity of a sovereign, esteemed the father of his people."

"Then you went to Adrianople, I presume, to solicit the countenance of the Porte."

Count Zriny raised his eyes, and fixing them on the emperor, said in a firmer voice: "Yes, sire, that was, in part, the object of my journey."

"It was!!—you declare it;—you dare me to my very face;" cried the emperor, turning angrily away.

"Your majesty will not condemn me, till you have heard me; your royal displeasure would be more than I could support."

"Well, speak on," observed the emperor, a little conciliated: "speak on, but rise!"

"Never, sire, until your royal anger be appeased. It was, I admit, one of the objects of my journey; but it was mainly to sound the intentions of the vizier. I was eager to learn what was passing in the Ottoman camp; to convince myself, with my own eyes, and to bring your majesty a faithful report, as well in regard to the assistance expected by the Hungarians, as to the amount of the enemy's forces."

"And by what means were you admitted to examine these matters? You must have had a warm

recommendation; and, I think, you must have played a very singular part."

"Your majesty need not be informed of the relations, existing between my brother-in-law, Tökely, and the Porte, notwithstanding my earnest opposition to such a course. This was the introduction I bore to the camp of Kara Mustapha; and I took advantage of the existing conspiracy, the better to serve my sovereign."

"Zriny," said the emperor, in a serious, yet paternal tone of voice; "you have ventured upon very slippery ground; how am I to know that you stumbled not?"

"My future conduct, sire, will be the surest pledge of my fidelity. I even make bold to observe, that my past conduct should plead something."

"That is well," replied Leopold; "we are about to hear mass; and I must go. Come, rise; go to your chamber, and try to compose your spirits. When I wish to see you, you shall have notice of it; and I will hear further what you have to say."

The count had some difficulty to support himself, and taking his leave, with expressions of respect and gratitude, he bent his faltering steps to the door. The emperor followed him with his eyes: "It is strange," he said aloud, when his favourite had withdrawn; "it is very suspicious; yet he dare hardly be a traitor, and avow such things to my face. However, I will keep my eye on him, and we shall see;" and with this soliloquy on his lips, the emperor followed the summons to

attend mass, and joined the courtly retinue that awaited him, in the ante-chamber of his palace.

"The unhappy Zriny, meantime, sought repose. But it was in vain he tried to calm the tumult of his feelings; though worn down with anxiety and fatigue, in vain he courted the relief of sleep. He had, for the most part, stated to the emperor what was strictly true; but had concealed the principal object of his journey to Munkats, which had operated a complete change in his opinions. On arriving at the mansion of his brother-in-law, he found the projects, so long contemplated, fully matured; while the results anticipated from them, differed widely from those of which Zriny had dreamed, in the enthusiasm of his character. He was an ardent patriot, and, among other brilliant objects of reform, he panted to behold his countrymen freed from the yoke of Austria. It was his ambition to declare her independence, without subjecting her to any ignominious connection with the Ottoman power.

Emmerich Tökely, on the other hand, with more experience, and greater wealth at his command, had chalked out a very different course. While he wished to rescue Hungary and Transylvania from the sway of Austria, it was with a view to his own aggrandisement,—to make himself a monarch, under the protection of the Porte,—a protection as necessary to acquire, as to preserve his dominion. This diversity of views, led to frequent and warm altercations on the subject; and it required all his sister's influence to prevent Zriny coming to an open rupture. He was convinced that Tökely's

views, could never coincide with his own; while the former openly ridiculed the more patriotic and splendid designs of the young count, as the idle reveries of an inexperienced boy. Zriny then determined to act alone, and to devote all his energies to realize the patriotic objects he had in view, without the assistance of a colleague. He calculated on his influence over the mind of his sovereign, and he hoped to be able to interest him in the project of reform, he had long contemplated. He had hastened, with the same motives, to hold an interview with Kara Mustapha, who had received him with all the pride and vanity of a barbarian. He treated the efforts of the Hungarian with disdain, and only useful, as being a stepping stone to his own ambition. He spoke with the utmost contempt of the emperor, and gave himself so many airs, in every way, as utterly to disgust the young Hungarian noble, who, quitting him with indignation, revolved in his mind a new plan of action. On his return, he had brought himself to believe, by no uncommon sophism, that in the emperor, his benefactor, he beheld two distinct characters;—the emperor of Germany, and the king of Hungary; to the former of whom alone he was bound to observe perfect allegiance. With a duplicity that imposed less on the emperor, than on himself, he imagined he could convert Leopold into the reformer of his country; and, with these high-plumed hopes, he had entered his master's cabinet, and engaged in the strange interview which we have just recounted.

The count soon found the fallacy of his patriotic expectations; the emperor remained firm and im-

mutable in his own views of government, in which he had been initiated from his earliest childhood. At the same time, he evinced no anger against the young count, who boldly asserted his opinions, and advocated them with a zeal which would not have been permitted in another. There was little time, however, to discuss the merits of the question : the approach of the grand vizier was announced, with every circumstance of exaggeration. He had already reached Buda, where Tökely had united his forces to the Ottomans ; and the two armies were now in full march upon Vienna.

The imperialists, reinforced by the different princes of the empire, had taken up a position near Presburg ; and on the 6th of May, the emperor, with a splendid retinue, proceeded to review the entire army on the plains of Kitsee. A splendid chapel had been prepared for the occasion ; the archbishop celebrated mass ; the imperial army being drawn out in front, to participate in the sacred ceremony, which the empress, likewise, with the entire court, consisting of German and Hungarian nobles, graced with her presence. On its conclusion, the archbishop proclaimed, in a loud voice, that all those who should engage in this holiest of wars against the infidels, were to receive from Rome a succession of indulgences for the space of 360 years ; after which, he bestowed his benediction both upon the court and the army. It was a scene calculated to revive the courage of the drooping soldiery : the army was, moreover, better organized, and more numerous than had been expected. The volunteers were full of ardour, and

the imperial court soon returned, with re-animated spirits, to the capital.

Tidings, too, arrived, stating that the vizier, by the advice of the other pachas, and of his ally Tökely, had commenced his project of marching direct for Vienna. He was now engaged in the siege of Raab, while clouds of Tartars, preceding the grand army of the Ottomans, spread themselves over the country, and ravaged and burned the unfortunate villages wherever they appeared. The inhabitants, struck with terror, fled on their approach; the alarm spread on all sides, and, with hundreds of poor refugees, soon filled the environs of the castle of Clamm.

There, after the departure of father Isidor, the lady of Volkersdorf had remained, unsupported and alone. Distracted by the various rumours which reached her, of the rapid march of the enemy, and the perils impending over the capital, she sought advice on all sides, yet knew not what course to adopt. At length, in the anguish of her fears, she resolved to join her daughter, and seek refuge in the capital; in order at least, to have the mournful satisfaction of sharing the fate of those whom she loved. She prepared, therefore, to set out, with the utmost haste; packed up almost every thing that was of no value, and forgot all that was of the slightest importance. She was then assisted into the old family coach, with her ancient steward and her women; the whole escorted by such of the male establishment as could yet support themselves on horseback, armed cap-a-pie with the old rusty family weapons, and all the agricultural imple-

ments which could be mustered for the occasion, and converted into instruments of defence. This antique procession presented a singular appearance; the exterior consisting, as it did, of a formidable bulwark of trunks and packages of the most grotesque description, and surrounded by some half dozen decayed servitors, and as many clod-hoppers from the hereditary farm. The footmen, in liveries of tarnished lace, were variously armed with hunting-spears, fowling-pieces, and halberts; the peasants, in tattered and soiled jerkins, bore the useful weapons called flails, axes, scythes, and hammers; headed up by the late baron's most ancient and respected valet-de-cham, who could boast some former century's exploits, in the ranks of departed cuirassiers. He was a very Quixote, as regarded both his valour and his equipment; for he wore an old helmet, with a vizor, and rode a hack, that might vie with Rosinante; while his companions were mounted on steeds fully as steady as Dapple, having previously been in harness some twenty years, and very recently unyoked from the plough.

The dame of Volkersdorf ordered the procession to stop and question every passenger they met; from each and all of whom she heard much more than she liked, relating to the formidable progress of the Mussulmans. Hungary, she was told, was in full revolt; towns and villages were sacked; the entire inhabitants put to the sword; and the mere handful of imperial troops in full retreat before the flushed and victorious Ottoman. Almost dead with terror, and having spent half the period required for her journey in these idle inquiries,

she at length gave orders for hastening forward to Vienna; but the heavy materiel of the expedition, namely, the great family coach and its luggage, proved a very serious obstacle to any thing like a flight. On approaching the city, her fears grew tenfold, on beholding the immense preparations for defence, which the old steward explained in the most learned and technical manner, and in a tone of mystery which aggravated her apprehensions to an indefinite extent. He informed her why the houses had been pulled down, why the palisades had been erected, and such a body of artificers employed in repairing the ramparts along the walls. On arriving at the Carinthian gate, she observed, in the midst of the workmen, an officer, whose pale and serious, yet dignified expression of countenance, attracted her attention.

"That is Count Stahremberg, the commander," cried the steward; "I saw him when I was here before."

"And who that fine-looking ecclesiastic who accompanies him?"

"That is our venerable bishop, the Count Collonitz."

The baroness recognised him. "What has he to do there?" she inquired.

"I am told, my lady, that he is always to be found wherever danger calls, and courage is wanting. To succour the unfortunate, too, is his delight."

Meantime the lumbering coach passed slowly through the two gates, and entered the city, which every where gave sign of coming war. They were conveying cannon to the ramparts; the heavy rolling

of the artillery, the neighing and tramp of horses, the cry to arms, mingled with the lamentations of women, and the screams of children, gave a peculiar appearance to the city. The citizens and students were seen performing military exercise, to train them to the defence of the bastions. The sight deprived the poor lady of what little courage she had left; and she began to speculate on the policy of having left her own castle, to run, as it seemed, into the very front and fury of the onset. But there she was; there was no help for it; and she alighted at one of the well-filled hotels. Scarcely had she set foot on the threshold, than she began to be sadly incommoded with the noises of every kind. She sent off to Madame de Preysing's, for the instant attendance of her daughter. Poor Catherine, half pleased and half terrified at the idea of some new misfortune, hastened to obey the summons, and was not a little re-assured, on learning from her own lips, that the whole resolved itself into the old lady's dread of becoming the sudden prey of some ferocious Tartar. What, however, was now to be done? she had already taken an aversion to the hotel; she had no relatives or acquaintances at Vienna, and for the last five-and-twenty years, she had never so much as quitted her ancient domain. Her daughter was at a loss how to advise her; but Madame de Preysing was at hand, and instantly offered her an apartment in her own house. Catherine was delighted, and expressed her gratitude in no measured terms; but she had no little difficulty in persuading her mother to accept it. She was made as happy as it was in the power of her excellent hostess, assisted by the

delightful Catherine, to make an antique baroness transplanted from her cloister; and though there was little in the character of the ladies that assimilated, they observed a distant civility; the baroness deigning to accept the comforts prepared for her, and to partake of her own society in her own apartments. Often did she sigh when she thought of her old castle, her antiquated state, the soothing councils of father Isidor, and the attentions of her time-worn and venerable attendants in their faded liveries, and their slow dignified movements.

How pleasant for Catherine, on the morning after her arrival, to be treated to an eulogium, or rather elegy of some hours' length, on the merits of the excellent father Isidor, ending with an inquiry as to her preparations for entering a convent. She was desirous it should take place immediately, to fill up the gap made in the family piety by the apostacy of Ludmilla, who, however, as she understood, made rather a brilliant figure in the first circles at Paris. This, she said, was some consolation; and poor Catherine had not the heart to undeceive her.

Meantime, Zriny had left no means untried to excite some interest in the bosom of Leopold for his unhappy country. He drew the picture of a happy and grateful people; he asked the smallest possible concessions; he worked upon every passion, and made every kind of appeal most calculated to impress a great or a good ruler; but Leopold remained inflexible. A barbarian chief, flushed with success, was approaching; the Austrian monarchy might crumble into ruins; the most humiliating fate might be reserved for him; but he was firm, and

could be led to look upon Tökely and the Hungarians, and even their advocates, only in the light of traitors. Zriny found himself caught in his own snare; he was involved in a maze of difficulties; the crisis was at hand; he must make his choice, and was bound, either to betray his benefactor and his sovereign, or reveal the entire plot, and ultimate views of his nearest relatives.

Neither Tökely nor the grand vizier were at all aware of what was passing, imagining that Count Zriny was still their ally, if not their accomplice. They conceived that he was playing into their hands, by remaining near the person of the emperor, and that he still enjoyed all the royal confidence; and Tökely had long since proposed to carry on, in cypher, a secret correspondence, by means of which, he should be able to anticipate the project of the Imperialists. But Zriny, since his explanations with the emperor, had given merely vague and unsatisfactory information, amusing them with accounts from France, and promises of support never meant to be realized. His position was thus become painful and embarrassing in the extreme; though no one who beheld him at the emperor's side, amiable, witty, and engaging as he had ever been,—the envy of courtiers and lovers, would have suspected what was passing in his mind. Leopold seemed daily to become more attached to him, as if, by giving him his full confidence, to make him forget that he had entertained suspicions of his loyalty.

The soundness of the count's views, moreover, his penetration and his indefatigable activity, were fully appreciated, at so momentous a period, by his

master. When retired to his own apartment, he no longer presented the character of the envied and distinguished favourite. His heart was torn by the bitterest conflicts between his country and his benefactor,—his loyalty, and his hatred of oppression, in so many forms. Often would he curse his own destiny, in the agony of his feelings, and the day when he first saw the light. He had tried every argument in the power of man to change the system of government, and the feelings of a mistaken and obdurate prince. Should he risk being called a traitor, an ingrate,—or desert his beloved country? His father had sealed his attachment for that country in his blood. And should he, for the hollow smiles of princes, and the pride and envy of a court, turn renegade to all the cherished hopes, and noblest motives that had actuated him from earliest childhood? It was, then, also, the sorrowful features of his wife rose before his view; he had left her wretched and alone; she whom he had first met, glowing in youth and beauty, surrounded by domestic love, happy in innocence, religious hope, and serenity of mind. He, it was, who had robbed her of all she held dear; her home, her friends, her reputation, and even her religious hopes. Remorse began to seize upon his heart; he could not bear the picture of the ruin he had wrought; he had returned ingratitude for love; had proved faithless to all who had reposed confidence in him, and was about to consummate his crimes, by betraying his royal master and benefactor himself. Haunted by images of pain and grief, his imagination gave a darker hue to every object by which he was surrounded; he threw off the trappings of state, sought to bury

himself in solitude; and closing his apartment, sat absorbed in wretched retrospect, and more fearful forebodings of the future. All at once, a slight noise near him, roused him from his reverie; his eye instantly turned to a corner of the room where a secret door, covered with tapestry, communicated with a staircase beyond the palace, and of which only his most confidential messenger held the key.

The next moment the pannel opened, and the figure of a monk entered the room. Zriny started up in alarm, when the man, throwing off his hood and cloak, presented the form of the faithful Kolschutzki, an old retainer of the deceased count, and strongly attached to the family. A Greek by birth, of singular talent and experience, he had seen almost every part of the world, and knew most languages. At a crisis like the present, he was a most valuable emissary to employ between the house of Tökely and Count Zriny. He was more particularly devoted to the service of the Princess Helena, and her consort Tökely, in whose interest he had opened a correspondence with many of the Pachas, now resident in Hungary. He had, however, realized a fortune, and it was merely from habit and affection to the family that he still continued to promote their views, without reference to any servile considerations.

Kolschutzki," exclaimed Zriny, "can it be you? I knew you not."

"So I believe," replied the Greek, "and I am glad of it. It is a proof that no one else is likely to recognise me; and it is better it should be. I bring you great news," saying which, he took a letter in cypher from his secret pocket, and handed

it to the count. "But what is the matter, my lord," he continued, struck with the pale, woe-worn expression of Zriny's features. "You have been ill; I am sure you have."

"It is not that, my dear Francis," replied the count; "no, I am pretty well;" at the same time placing his hand, so as to shade his face, while he decyphered the letter by a key which he took from his secret drawer. But the emissary still looked at him with an anxious expression; he saw there was something going very wrong, though he forbore to question him farther. The letter, too, appeared to agitate the count exceedingly. He perused, and re-perused it with intense interest; and at length exclaimed: "Good God! then the die is cast! who gave you this letter?"

"Yvan; you know him well. He was sent by your brother Tökely. He came post from the grand vizier, who is in full march from Raab upon Vienna."

"Know you the contents of this?"

"In part I do; no persuasions on the part of his pachas, the remonstrances of Tökely, nor the Duke of Lorraine, in his front, have prevailed with Kara Mustapha, to delay his march for the capital. He is bearing down with his whole strength upon the devoted city. Yvan, himself, saw immense bodies of Tartars, devastating the country, and already upon the banks of the lake Neusiedel."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing, at least certain. The grand vizier counts upon your co-operation and support; your brother also, though I am ignorant as to the manner." While speaking, he fixed a penetrating eye

upon the count, whose mind, wrung by remorse, could not sustain the glance, as he thought of the approaching crisis. He grew pale, and trembled. " Away! we have done!" he cried, " and we may happen to be surprised."

Kolschutzki made his obeisance, advanced towards the secret door, hesitated a moment, and then returned: " My lord, I know not the contents, on my oath; but if that letter exacts any thing from you, which compels you to avoid the scrutiny of an old and faithful servant of your house, believe a humble friend like Francis, it will be better you should not engage in it."

Zriny made an angry gesture. He was about to speak, but contented himself with waving his hand for him to depart. The signal was obeyed; and the count once more threw himself upon his couch; a prey to the most violent and conflicting feelings. The tidings he had just received confirmed his worst fears.

Tökely was in strict alliance with the Porte; he had united his forces to those of the vizier, and they were advancing, by forced marches, to besiege the capital. What would be the fate of Hungary, with the proud Tökely at its head, and humbled into a vice-royalty of the enemies of Christianity? There was another, and still more pressing subject of deliberation. Tökely was resolved that Leopold should not fall into the hands of a haughty barbarian, but take refuge in Hungary, under the surveillance of himself and his party. He declared that some means must be devised, as early as possible, to conduct him into his own power; and that Zriny was the only person who could put the

scheme into execution. They could then dictate what terms they pleased, in behalf of the Hungarians; and he reminded the count of the wrongs suffered by his father, and what he himself owed to his country. "If we fail now," he concluded, "to profit by the course of events, the cause of our country is lost for ever; its fate is in your hands; the fate of yourself and your family; think well ere you refuse, and remember the dying words of your noble and patriotic father."

It was these lines which had so powerfully affected the count in the presence of the emissary. He felt as a son, and a patriot; but he was also the adopted child of Leopold,—the favourite of his monarch; and how was he to act under motives so strangely and so equally at variance. The tumult of his feelings, thus placed in fearful conflict, was followed by a sense of desolation and despair, which evinced that a yet more terrible calamity was not far distant. His mind was in that state, which argues the approach of insanity; and upon perusing the still more forcible appeals to his patriotism, from his sister Helena, the confusion and excitement of his ideas acquired a fresh impulse, he could no longer resist. She reminded him of the honour and glory of their house; the distinguished service srendered by his ancestors to their country; the memorable defence of Szigeth, and all which their uncle, the Khan of Croatia, had sacrificed for his king.* She depicted in the liveliest colours the ingratitude of the court of Vienna;

* Count Nicholas Zriny lost his life in defending the fortress of Szigeth. Körner, the Tyrtæus of Germany, has celebrated his

the injustice and extortions it inflicted; and the base treachery it had displayed, in first engaging their noble father in a conspiracy, and subsequently betraying him into the hands of the executioner. But he died in the noblest and best of causes, leaving an example of virtue and patriotism to his children.

It was this last appeal which decided the wretched count; he sat down to write, and twenty times he tore what he had written. But his determination to embrace the project of Tökely was taken, and he wrote briefly to that effect. He declared that he would induce the emperor to withdraw to Lintz, along the right bank of the Danube; where doubtless the dark forest of Wienerwald, over the mountain of Ridenberg, would give a safe opportunity to carry off the royal person. He next resolved to despatch his letter by the faithful Kolschutzky, immediately; and throwing on a morning dress, he set out in search of him. He traversed the yet unfrequented streets to reach the Red Tower, near which the emissary had taken up his abode. How deliciously the cool air met his burning temples! He turned his eye towards the majestic Danube; he paused, delighted with the quiet scenery which burst upon his view. Nature still bloomed in all her freshness and loveliness; and seemed to speak peace to his soul. The convent of the Camaldoli, and the ruins of aged castles in the distance, with elegant villas and enchanting gardens in the fore-

exploits in a noble tragedy. The nephew of this hero was Khan of Croatia, distinguished for his valour in the first wars against the Turks, and also as an able statesman. He was unfortunately killed while engaged in the chace, by the tusks of a wild boar.

ground, rose before his view. "Alas!" thought he, "what will become of all this beauty,—this magnificence of nature and of art, in the lapse of a few brief days? Hosts of barbarians, like clouds of locusts, will soon darken the brightness of the imperial city, and these enchanting environs. The rage of the infidel will level these mighty ramparts; these edifices will be a heap of ruins; this noble stream will flow stained with the blood of the Christians, or see them borne away into frightful captivity.—And who," he exclaimed, "opened a way to disasters and calamities, like these?—who invited and supported these ferocious hordes, breathing only carnage and desolation?" Zriny shuddered; he paused as he passed the bridge, and, by a strange momentary impulse, felt inclined to end his doubts and troubles at once, by throwing himself from the parapet into the waves. He would have done it, had not the same love of his country, which had brought so many misfortunes upon his house, arrested the fatal step, and whispered that it was a cowardly act thus to fly from an existence which ought to be devoted to the freedom and happiness of his native land. He felt a pang of shame at the idea; he rallied all his strength of purpose, and with a rapid step sought the residence of Kolschutzky. He no longer hesitated, but gave him the letter with the strongest injunctions to use despatch. It was received by the attached and faithful Francis with a look of painful solicitude; from which the count turned away with an expression of impatience, and hastily retraced his steps. The die was now cast; and the decision to which he had come, in removing the torturing doubts and

conflicts of continued suspense, seemed to give immense relief to his mind. He was enabled to take several hours repose; from which he was awoke only by a summons to attend the emperor.

He found Stahremberg, the bishop of Collonitz, and other ministers already in attendance; for tidings had just been received of the rapid approach of the Turks, and the retreat of the imperial generals. No time was to be lost; they would be under the walls of Vienna in five or six days, and Leopold was advised to remove to some place, if not of greater security, at a greater distance.

"We shall see," observed the monarch, "there will always be time to run away."

"Not always, sire," replied Count Stahremberg; "permit me to say, that if ever, your departure ought to take place within a few hours."

"I will not quit my capital, nor my people of Vienna," replied the emperor, with firmness, "at least, not while we can find any other expedient. Besides, it is a matter of importance, general, that I should remain; the whole city would be thrown into confusion."

"And how know we?" observed Zriny, "that the danger is so near at hand? After all, it may only be one of the fancies of the hour."

"It is no idle rumour," returned Stahremberg, drily; "a courier from the Duke of Lorraine, has brought the information, even now."

"It is high time, then," exclaimed the bishop, in evident alarm, "that your majesty look to your personal safety, and leave Vienna."

"And you, too, my good bishop," cried the emperor; "will you have me set the example of a

general flight, and let the walls of my capital be scaled without a struggle? We must preserve public order."

"Permit me, sire," observed Count Zriny, turning from the other ministers, directly towards Leopold, to attract his attention, "to explain how I am of opinion; your majesty might consult your own safety, and what you feel due to your people of the capital, at the same time. Could your majesty not set out as if engaged on a journey of pleasure, not one of absolute necessity, on the spur of the occasion?"

"What!" interrupted Stahremberg; "this appears very singular sort of advice, except, indeed, from a very young man!"

"As your excellency, in the depth of your judgment, may deign to decide," retorted Zriny, with an ironical smile. "Yes, I am unfortunately young, and have none of those old, experienced views."

"Zriny!" interrupted the emperor, in a grave tone; "think where you are."

"Pardon me, sire," returned the young count, while anger flushed his brow, and he bit his lips till the blood sprang from his excess of rage; "but I am silent."

"Well, well; say what you please," observed the good-natured Leopold, noticing his excessive agitation.

"It would be too presumptuous, I feel, to give my opinion in presence of those veteran counsellors, who have the honour to be near your royal person."

"Speak, I command you," said the emperor.

"I was going to observe, sire," resumed Zriny,

"that your majesty, under pretext of withdrawing from the din and tumult of the city, might first visit your palace of Schoenbrun, and thence proceed through the imperial park, as if engaged in the pleasures of the chace, on your journey to Lintz. This will make no noise, and time will be given to obviate any ill effects to be apprehended from your majesty's departure."

"You might give worse advice, my friend," said the emperor; "we must take it into consideration."

"And granting it is adopted," observed the bishop; "would your majesty proceed along the right bank of the river?"

"Of course," replied Zriny; "it is the direct road to Lintz. If proper measures be adopted, his majesty may reach it before his absence can be even rumoured at Vienna."

"And how," exclaimed Stahremberg, "are we to provide an escort to ensure the protection of his majesty's person? The imperial army is posted on the left; and you know that the Duke Charles has repassed the Danube in full retreat."

"If your majesty really think you require a military escort," observed Zriny, "when surrounded by your faithful subjects, you can order some companies from the reserve, stationed at Krema."

"From Krema! the hospital of invalids!" exclaimed Stahremberg, in an ironical tone; "a pretty protection for the royal person, forsooth!"

"It will not do;" said the bishop, very seriously; "let me entreat that your majesty do not venture along the right bank of the river."

"But what is the great danger you apprehend?" inquired Leopold.

"The advanced posts of the enemy," replied Collonitz; "perhaps, still nearer than we apprehend, for who is there to oppose them?"

"I agree with you," added Stahremberg, "some grievous misfortune might result from proceeding along the right bank; I cannot conceive what motive can suggest any such advice."

"The only question," said Zriny, "is, whether it be not preferable in a juncture like this, that your majesty should decide according to your own judgment, upon the course to be pursued."

"A faithful subject," interrupted Stahremberg, "will never recommend a step so fraught with danger as this."

"What mean you, sir? how dare you, sir, prefer accusations like those in the presence of my sovereign?" exclaimed the count, wholly thrown off his guard. "My gracious master knows —"

"What! again, Zriny!" interrupted the emperor. "Go on general."

"You say," continued Stahremberg, "that the emperor knows you, and it is true; such as you have pleased to *show yourself*, but not such as you are."

"That to my face, general! it is too much. Grant you, I am young; and you the commander of the city; am I, sir, less the gentleman,—and less to be treated as such? But you are aware of the protection afforded you in this place, or, by heavens! you should give me most exemplary satisfaction." He trembled with rage as he spoke; fire flashed from his eyes, and a deadly paleness sat upon his cheek; he had a bitter struggle to bear the humiliation of seeing his secret object detected and

exposed, as it were, to the eyes of his sovereign by his enemies. Fixing a look of concentrated hatred and contempt upon Stahremberg, he made his obeisance to the emperor, and hastened from the council; — the last words of Leopold, "You have reason to rejoice, you are not going under arrest; but take care how you tempt me further!" still ringing in his ears.

"That young man," said the bishop, "has a wonderfully high opinion of himself."

"He is a young fool," added Stahremberg; "puffed with pride, presumption, and vanity of all kinds; please God it be nothing worse!"

"General," said the emperor, "I am well aware that regard for my person urges you to speak thus, and I thank you for it. But do not be unjust; such accusations are too serious; think you him capable of betraying me,—his benefactor?"

"Yes, sire! capable of any thing; his vanity has turned his head; and most probably he will give your majesty more convincing proofs of it, ere long. He has traitor written on his brow."

"You have told me as much before; you described his journey to Munkats and Adrianople in the blackest colours; yet I ascertained that you were mistaken in your opinion of him." Stahremberg bit his lip; — "far be it from me to question your majesty's penetration; yet I cannot doubt the truth of the information I have received respecting him. But time presses; let me beseech your majesty to permit us to make preparations for your departure,—not later than another morning."

"To-morrow morning! impossible, Stahremberg. The empress is not yet informed of it, nor a per-

son in my palace. There are a thousand things to be thought of;— my librarian, Lambeccius has not half packed up my books and medals, — nothing must be lost!—to-morrow!—impossible!" repeated the poor monarch, not a little puzzled what to think, much less how to act in such a dilemma.

At this moment, old Lambeccius, hearing his name, advanced from behind a rampart of books where he had entrenched himself apart from the conference, and hobbling up with a most lugubrious look: "Heaven help us!" he said, drawing a deep sigh; "talk of packing up the royal library, and all these precious collections of rarities for to-morrow morning. '*Festina lente*,' was the motto of the Emperor Augustus. Only reflect, sire, what misfortunes might arise by attempting too much in a given time; yes, irreparable misfortunes!"

"Your Latin will do us no good, friend," said the commander, smiling, "unless you can translate it into cannon law against the infidels; but to show you I have not quite forgotten my grammar, I give you my favourite proverb, '*Audaces fortuna juvat;*' so I advise you to set speedily to work, and pack up your bales of science."

"Don't be afraid, Lambeccius," said the emperor, to the terrified man of letters; "there is no such great hurry as the general talks of; the thing cannot be done; we are not going on a military expedition; there is aways time to run away, I repeat. Still there is no harm in beginning to pack up, — only do not disturb yourself; have some regard to your age; and take your time, and *vale, Lambecci;* that is, 'make haste,' or the Turks will save us the trouble." The poor bibliopole, half dead with

terror, made his exit with his usual, formal bow; though his legs could hardly support him. While thus jesting, however, with his librarian for a moment, the emperor, aided by his ministers, lost no time in taking the necessary measures; and having every thing prepared, in case of more alarming tidings, for the royal departure.

Meantime, the rapid progress of the Turks becoming known, the city was thrown into great excitation. Anxiety, or terror, were depicted in every countenance; groups of men were seen consulting; others were seen running to and fro, as if at a loss whither to fly; while a confused murmur and lugubrious sounds filled the whole air. Though less visible, the wretchedness and lamentations in the houses, were still more affecting; for the inhabitants had now lost their final hope, that the Turks would confine their attempts to the capture of Presburg and Raab, instead of marching for the capital.

CHAPTER II.

Some days had elapsed, since the violent scene which took place in the emperor's presence, and Count Zriny had received no fresh summons to appear in the cabinet. It was a humiliation he could ill bear; yet it served to allay the remorse he felt at the idea of betraying his benefactor into the hands of the insurgents. He conceived he had been injured, and even unjustly condemned by him in the face of his enemies. He had been openly insulted and accused, yet was not permitted to retaliate. Had the accusation been wholly unfounded, he would have felt irritated; he hated Stahremberg, because he had penetrated his design; and he ventured no longer to count upon the favour of his sovereign. He turned now to the example of patriots, who had sacrificed all private interests and affections to the public weal; and why, should the days of a Brutus or a Timoleon be fled for ever? Deceived by these patriotic illusions, he believed himself to be called upon to achieve some lofty enterprise that should commemorate his name, and produce a new era in the

annals of his country. He was inspired with renewed vigour and resolution at the idea; events called for action; and his first object towards the accomplishment of all he had in view, was to possess himself of the emperor's person, and extort those rights and privileges, which he had in vain solicited for his country. Before venturing further, however, with so decisive a measure, there were some duties of a tenderer nature, to which he could not at such a moment be indifferent; the image of his wife, his once beautiful and beloved Ludmilla, rose, with sorrowing and reproachful look before his fancy; it was then he felt her real excellence, her noble disinterestedness, her tenderness, and all the sacrifices she had made for him alone; and he resolved, as far as yet lay in his power, to repair his fault, and do full justice to her worth. He wrote to his sister Helena, recommending her by every appeal of affection, and explaining that she had every legal title to the name of a sister and a wife. After despatching this letter, he hastened to the residence of Catherine; told her what he had done; and after taking a tender farewell of her, as the sister of his Ludmilla, gave the faithful Kolschutzki exact directions how he was to provide for her safety, if the city should be carried by assault. She was instantly to be placed under the protection of Tökely.

Scarcely had he made these arrangements, and returned to his mansion, before he heard a violent tumult and uproar in the vicinity of the palace. There was a hurrying through the corridors, high voices were heard, succeeded by mutterings or whisperings; doors were suddenly opened and

closed; in short, all announced that some strange and important event had taken place. The count rang for his page, who entered the room pale and trembling; and stammered out, in answer to a look of interrogation, that the Austrians had suffered a signal defeat at Petronell, and that in a very few hours, the Ottoman banners would be seen unfurled under the walls of Vienna.

Eager for action, as he now was, this announcement at first startled the count, till he began to reflect on the improbability of such an occurrence. He hastened to the body guards, in order to learn from the commanding officer some official account, and soon found that the one he had heard was much exaggerated. The Duke of Lorraine, indeed, could not oppose the grand vizier under the walls of Raab: he had retired with no little haste; had passed the Danube with his infantry, and attempted with his cavalry, to cover the city of Vienna, by marching along the opposite bank. But Kara Mustapha, bent upon carrying the imperial city by surprise, used every effort to anticipate his movements, and reach it before him. Innumerable hordes of Tartars preceded his line of march, spreading terror and consternation over the whole face of the country. Fire and desolation followed in their path; not a town, not an inhabitant, was spared; and those who fell not by the sword, were led into more wretched captivity. The few exceptions, were such places as threw themselves upon the protection of Tökely, swearing fealty to him as their future king. The advanced guard of the Austrians had reached Petronell, where the majestic river rolls through the plains, and the ruins

of Roman edifices point out the site of the ancient town of Carnuntum. There they were suddenly attacked by a large body of Tartars, who sprung from an ambuscade; and uttering horrible yells, fell upon the Austrians, who, imagining they were surrounded by the whole Ottoman army, were seized with panic. It was only by great efforts that the Margrave of Baden was enabled to undeceive and re-assure them, so as to retreat with some degree of order upon the main body of the imperialists. Some of the camp equipage, however, fell into the hands of the Tartars; a number of distinguished officers were slain, among whom was the Prince of Croy; but the action made no impression upon the movements of the army, which pursued its march along both banks of the Danube.

It was now Zriny's object to obtain an interview with the emperor, to learn by what road he intended to withdraw from the capital; and to influence him, by indirect means, to adopt that most favourable to the success of his project. In a few hours it might be too late; he was preparing to hasten to the court, when he received a summons from Leopold himself to attend. Zriny started; but soon resumed his firmness, and following the royal page, bade him instantly to announce him. The doors were thrown open; the count entered, looking extremely pale and feeble.

"How are you, Zriny?" said the emperor; "I am truly concerned to see you are so very weak and ill; I suppose you have heard what has occurred? and we must at last set out."

"I have heard so, sire, yet I can hardly — I do not wish to believe it."

"It is true, however," replied Leopold; "our affairs are in a bad train; the hand of the Lord is heavy upon us."

Now came the decisive moment; "And what," asked Zriny, "is it your majesty proposes to do?"

"That which I am compelled to; to leave the city instantly."

"There is not a moment more to lose," observed the bishop Collonitz.

"The only question is, the route we are to take; let us decide. You advised me, Zriny, to take the right of the river along the great road. My lords here do not agree with you."

"I could wish to hear your majesty's unbiassed opinion."

"I think with you, my friend; and our burgermaster here, also. Speak, Liebenberg, what are your reasons?" said the emperor.—He explained them, and a warm discussion now took place between Liebenberg and the other persons present; but it led to no satisfactory result. Leopold then turned to Count Zriny: "You are young, my dear friend; but you have rare penetration, and no little experience; let us hear more fully what you have to say on this perplexing point."

Zriny seized the opportunity; and in the most eloquent and plausible terms, supported the same view as had just been taken by M. de Liebenberg. He insisted that an army in full retreat, like his own, and probably by this time, in complete disorder, was little calculated to afford safety, or protect the royal person in case of any emergency. It would rather tend to impede his progress; the roads would be strewed with the wreck of artillery

and equipage; parties of the enemy would be sweeping the country in all directions, on the line of march; while, on the contrary, by taking the other side of the river, his majesty would easily reach Lintz, in four-and-twenty hours, even before the grand vizier had time to put his troops in motion, in that direction. In short, he argued that by adopting this plan, every danger would be obviated, and that the journey would be conducted at once with safety and convenience.

This advice was as eagerly and warmly opposed by the other ministers; but Leopold, after giving them a patient hearing, broke up the council, dismissing all the members, with the exception of Count Zriny. He had triumphed; and with beating heart and perturbed countenance, hastened to obey the orders of the emperor. The master of the horse was summoned; relays of posts were commanded to be ready at short distances, along the right bank of the river, on the high road to Lintz. Scarcely had this been done, when the door flew open, and the empress herself, pale as death, and supported by her women, approached, and accosted her royal consort in the utmost alarm.

"Can it be true? — the Turks at Fischausen, and we to leave the city, and rush into destruction?"

The emperor was not a little alarmed to find his consort already informed of the step he was about to take.

"Do not alarm yourself; it is not so bad; the Turks are not at Fischausen, though it is true that they are pretty near us."

"Alas! I know all; the news came at five this

morning; our army is annihilated, and we are lost. God deals hardly with us."

"They have done very wrong to give you these alarming accounts; I was just coming to inform you myself, as to the real state of things."

"You need not," exclaimed the empress, bursting into an agony of tears; "the palace, the whole city resounds with the fearful tidings, — what will become of us, — whither shall we fly?"

"We are going to Lintz," replied the emperor, calmly: "every thing is arranged, and we shall set out this evening."

"Gracious God! this evening; and what is to become of my children?"

"There is not a moment to lose," urged the emperor.

"Yes, I see it but too well; but how, in my wretched state, can I support a journey along the left road?"

"Fear nothing; we take the high road to the right of the river; you will have every accommodation, and we shall be in perfect safety, the moment we reach Lintz."

"The Turks will soon drive us thence," cried the empress; "once in possession of Vienna; — and how, in such an ill defended state, can it resist? Every other place must fall before them."

The emperor was deeply affected; he cast an inquiring look at Zriny; "May I not be permitted to accompany your majesty?" said the count, in a low and trembling tone.

"How!" cried Leopold, "would you attend us in our flight?— I fear we should have small accommodation, count."

"May I venture to follow on horseback?" he persisted in a manner that showed how deeply he was affected.

"You could not, count; we shall proceed too rapidly."

"Oh, yes, permit me only," intreated the count; "I can do it."

"You shall not run any such risk for me, my young friend," replied Leopold; "you are not well; —I have too great regard both for your health and your life; yet, dear Zriny, whatever may happen, believe me, I feel grateful for your unwearied care and devotion; — I may never see you more, and I now speak as a friend—not as a master."

"Oh my God, my God!" exclaimed the count, thrown off his guard, and concealing his face in his hands; "it is too much! such goodness overwhelms me!" His agitation was terrible.

"What *can* be the matter; you are taken ill again;" cried the emperor, in the most affectionate manner. "My dear friend, we must have help; or can it be the misfortunes of myself and family which move you thus? You have an excellent heart; but we must part, — and if — if we never more meet, may God bless you!" He pressed the count's hands between his own, and a tear stood in the good-natured monarch's eye. The count no longer struggled with his feelings: he threw himself at the emperor's feet, who in vain attempted to raise him. "Courage, my friend; I intreat of you, even for my sake."

"Blast me not!" exclaimed the wretched Zriny, "by this excess of goodness. I am unworthy of it — unworthy of being raised up by the hand of

my noble sovereign. Let me writhe in the dust; and, in the very agony of my soul, ask pardon for a criminal!"

"What mean you? — are you mad, Zriny?"

The count was mute; his head hung upon his knee, and a convulsive trembling seized every limb. His looks were wild and terrible; and it was but too apparent that his mind wandered.

"Hasten, madam!" cried Leopold, in great alarm, to the empress, at the same time giving her his hand — "it is too distressing a sight for you!" and he conducted her into another apartment. He then hastened back to the count, and, in the most soothing and encouraging manner, sought to raise him from the ground. "Be a man, Zriny! fear nothing, — all may yet be well!"

The count suddenly sprang to his feet, and, fixing his wild and haggard looks upon the emperor, as he recovered his senses for a moment — "Where have I been? — Ah! it is you! — then fear the worst; I warn you!" Then, in a milder tone, he added, "Alas! sire, I am a traitor! — go not along the right banks!" and, bursting into a passion of tears, he again fell at the emperor's feet.

"Now, indeed," said Leopold, "you have lost your senses!" actually believing it was a continuation of the access by which he had just been attacked.

"I know what I am saying, sire. In the name of all that is sacred — all you value most dearly — go not along the high road, I say; for misfortune and captivity await you, as treachery would have led you thither."

The emperor started, and recoiled a step or two from Zriny, whose features exhibited all that remorse and horror can express in the human countenance. "Why go on raving thus, Zriny?" replied the emperor; — "did you not advise me yourself to take the high road, as the safest and best?"

"It was I — it was!" he replied, in a stifled tone, and burying his head in his hands.

"And now," asked the emperor, calmly, "you wish me not to follow your advice — is that it?"

"Yes; I beseech you, sire, to abandon the idea; but hasten to pass the Danube — fly by the left bank, and save yourself!"

"To meet a routed army!" cried Leopold, in a voice of bitter sorrow.

"Far better than the great road, for there certain destruction awaits you. They are coming — they will seize you!"

"Of whom do you speak?" inquired the emperor, perceiving more congruity in the count's language; at the same time recollecting Stahremberg's observations and suspicions; — "who are coming? — Speak! I command you, unhappy man!"

"I cannot — I dare not! enough that I warn your majesty at the peril of my life."

"I will know," persisted the emperor, "what I have to expect."

"No! let your majesty strike off my head at once, as you did my father's! — I deserve it; he did not. I am guilty towards you; and, wretch that I am! I have betrayed my country. Not a

word more shall you hear from my lips. Now, to the scaffold!"

"What! you confess yourself a traitor!" cried the emperor, deeply grieved; — "you whom I loved and cherished as my own son!"

"I am that monster of ingratitude!" replied Zriny; "I am unworthy, too, of my father, and of the unhappy country that gave me birth!"

"Give up your accomplices, sir, — I will know them."

"Never!" replied Zriny; and he remained silent.

"Listen, unhappy man! — I give you my royal word for your life."

There was no reply. Every passion of the despot and the man now shook the soul of Leopold, and the struggle was severe. Anger, indignation, affection for the unfortunate count, whom he had so long loved, and who had voluntarily rushed into ruin, from a sense of gratitude to his benefactor, all, by turns, prevailed in the mind of Leopold. Gradually the feelings of the father and the friend assumed the sway; his eyes moistened, his voice softened, and, in the most endearing terms, he sought to encourage the criminal, yet remorseful Zriny. It was in vain; he would receive no consolation; and he would betray no friends. He wished for death; the heart of the patriot was broken; he thought of his father, and of his country's bitter wrongs; and he stood — the victim of gratitude towards a kind-hearted master, to save whom he had sacrificed more than life itself.

"It is well!" cried the emperor, resuming all

the feelings of the despot: "young madman, you have provoked your fate; and let it fall upon your devoted head!" He rang the bell; the chamberlain appeared. "Hark you! quick; send the officer of the guard!" Both the emperor and the count remained silent till he appeared. Zriny moved not a feature, still in the same attitude. "Captain, behold your prisoner!" said Leopold, averting his eyes, at the same time, from the unfortunate count, as if distrusting his own firmness, while he spoke the fatal words.

The officer appeared surprised, and even agitated and alarmed; for a moment he stood rooted to the spot; then, hastily approaching the count, he was about to take his sword. Zriny himself prevented it; and, turning towards Leopold as he retired, he said, "I die, sire, without regret;—I am not an ingrate; you are saved, and God protect you!"

The tears were in the emperor's eyes; he could only wave his hand; but, beckoning the officer to him, he said, in a low voice, "Take him into his own chambers; and keep a strict guard, or your head must answer for it!"

Zriny, accompanied by the officer, left the cabinet: on descending the steps of the palace, a carriage at full speed approached and drew up. It was General Caprara; he alighted in haste, ascended the staircase, and required to be instantly admitted to an audience with his majesty.

He came direct from the army, and the accounts he brought somewhat relieved the anxiety of the emperor for the fate of the army. He learnt, with satisfaction, that the infantry were retiring in good

order, along the left banks of the Danube, upon the capital, and that a small body of the cavalry had acquitted themselves in the most brilliant manner. Caprara confessed that he had lost his baggage, which he considered trifling, however, under the circumstances in which he had been engaged. The emperor instantly despatched a confidential messenger with these re-assuring tidings to his unhappy consort; and he then learnt, with equal sorrow and dismay, that Tökely and his associates had appeared in force upon the right banks, with a view, it was ascertained, of possessing themselves, by surprise, of the person of the emperor; while, on the left, he might pursue his journey in perfect safety, from the circumstance of being protected by the whole force of the imperial army. The commands, therefore, already given, were promptly countermanded; a new route was traced out, and the court prepared for instant departure. Tidings of this soon spread throughout the city, producing the utmost excitement and dismay. Numbers of the inhabitants prepared to quit the city; others were eagerly engaged in secreting their property, while a greater portion seemed intent only upon securing their personal safety, or that of their distracted wives and children.

Before setting out, the grand marshal had been charged by the emperor to seize all the papers belonging to Count Zriny; and, on following the officer in charge of him, Count Martinitz was both surprised and affected to behold him in a state of mind bordering upon the most decided insanity. Having obtained possession of his keys, with as much gentleness as he could employ, he carried

the whole of the manuscripts he could find, after first placing his seal upon them, to the emperor, informing him also that the count appeared to be in a situation which called for instant medical attendance. Leopold received the papers, but said not a word. It was observed, however, that his hand trembled; and the moment the grand marshal retired, he rang for his own physician, whom he desired to hasten with all speed to the house of Count Zriny, and to report his actual state personally to himself on his return.

But what, during the progress of these events, was the hopeless condition of the antique lady of Volkersdorf? — What, moreover, were her sensations, when her no less venerable maid in waiting suddenly burst into the room, and, in a voice between a scream and a howl, proclaimed that the whole court was taking to flight — that all the state-carriages were in readiness, and that every body that had courage enough, was going to cross the Danube with the court, and seek an asylum in the town of Konnenburg. "All Vienna," she added, "had run out into the streets, which were nearly inundated with the people's tears, while the air echoed with groans and sighs to behold the good Leopold leaving his capital. The empress, too, looked as pale as death upon the white horse, and was actually crying; that the emperor's hand, and even his head shook, which she thought a sign of his being paralytic, though he looked as calm and patient as St. Stephen when they were stoning him."

On hearing this confirmation of her worst fears, the unhappy lady could no longer be kept in any

bounds; she declared it was all over—that the churches would all be turned into mosques, the world over, and the poor Viennese be all converted into Musselmans. She would not stay another moment at Vienna; that Kara Mustapha was only the scourge of God, and that the city was foredoomed to destruction; orders were forthwith issued to hire relays of horses, and Catherine and the whole household, busied in making momentary arrangements, were to think only of packing themselves, instead of their goods and chattels, in the old family vehicle.

It is impossible to give an idea of the poor lady's horror and vexation, when she heard that no post-horses were to be had. The attendants of the court had retained every one, to the sorriest hack that was to be met with in Vienna. All at once, to her mother's great joy, the gentle Catherine bethought her of the four old family steeds which had transported their lady to the condemned city. They had, luckily, not yet been sent home again; and why, if they had not died in the interval, might they not travel back again as easily as they had come. This was admirable logic; but it would not so well apply to the old, crazy, family coach, and the antique harness, both of which had suffered by the former journey. The poor countess was terrified out of her wits at the delay; it was only Catherine who preserved the same noble firmness and presence of mind. Her activity and cheerfulness equalled her other excellent qualities; and she soon succeeded in allaying her mother's apprehensions, and placing every thing in a good train. She then hastened to take farewell of her friend Ma-

dame de Preysing: "My dear girl," said the latter, "you must pause; news have just arrived,—worse and worse. The enemy has already passed the Zeytha:* and we can see the flames bursting from the villages on the side from which they are advancing. To-morrow we shall see the infidel standards waving under the walls of Vienna. Oh, my love! the Tartars are already at Bertholsdorf, and I am told they commit the most frightful crimes imaginable. Alas! every minute brings some tidings worse than the last."

"Oh, my God! what will become of us?" cried Catherine.

"We must wait with resignation," replied her friend; "but I have another piece of intelligence for you, which touches you more nearly, and will, I fear, give you pain."

"Oh, heavens, is it from Warsaw!" exclaimed the poor girl, turning deadly pale, and thinking of Sandor Szlatinski.

"It is not from Poland, my dear;" and she then informed her of the whole of Tökely's conspiracy, to surprise and carry off the emperor. "And, would you believe it? Count Zriny is one of the traitors!"

"Oh! you terrify me," replied Catherine; "my poor, poor, sister!" and she burst into a flood of uncontrollable weeping.

Her friend tried to console, by every means, and half repented having revealed the name of the count. "There were hopes, too," she continued, "of the emperor's mercy; the unfortunate man

* One of the small rivers which falls into the Danube.

being in a state of fearful excitement, if not of confirmed insanity."

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed Catherine. "alone—suffering—and abandoned—not even a wife or a sister. Lost, unhappy Zriny!"

It was fortunate for Catherine, that she was allowed little time for reflection upon this painful event. Active duties called for all her excellent judgment, kindness, and firmness; she had to break the disastrous tidings, in the gentlest manner, to her sister; and she had to attend her mother, under circumstances of the most trying nature. Though full of sorrow, she did not despair; she threw herself on her knees, the moment her friend left her, and poured forth her prayers to Him who can alone assist those, who have none other to help them. She prayed long and fervently, and though she wept, they were no longer tears of bitterness, and she felt far more happy and resigned. Wiping away her tears, she rose and approached the window, and gazed wistfully into the streets. Suddenly, she heard some one approach; she turned round, and started on beholding a man, dressed like a Greek, with huge moustache, and enveloped in a large cloak. "Who are you?" cried Catherine, in evident alarm; "and what have you to say to me?"

He threw aside his cloak, and sought to prevent her making her escape; she struggled, and was about to scream for help, when he said in a low voice, "I am a friend;—and a friend of the Zriny family. For God's sake, hear me, and don't cry out! I am Kolschutzki."

"What of Count Zriny?" replied Catherine, assuming more confidence.

"He is very unfortunate, lady; yet his life is valuable, both to me and others. Alas! I know him, perhaps better than he knows himself; and had he followed the advice of a faithful servant, he would have avoided the misfortunes which now overwhelm him."

"You alarm me! is it indeed true, that he is a prisoner — for treason?"

"He is his own accuser," replied Kolschutzki; "he had not the heart to commit a crime, though without strength to keep the path of duty."

Catherine was extremely affected; "Oh, yes! I am sure he has a good heart;—he has been his own enemy—" and her sister's name was on her lips.

"It is at his behest I am now here. My poor young master,—for such I must ever consider him,—came to my house, with a letter for the Princess Helena, and, at the same time, left me particular directions regarding yourself."

"For me! at a time like this!"

"Yes, my lady; it seems as if he had some presentiment of his fate; or, having resolved to reveal something to the emperor, he felt he had little time to lose, in consulting for the safety of those most dear to him. He desired me, in the event of a siege, to seek an interview with you; and, in his name, to offer you my most devoted care and service, to obey you in every particular, and protect you from all risk."

"Did he?—did Count Zriny say that? Did he

think of me at such a moment, when so great a calamity hung over him? Noble, generous Zriny!" and it was in vain she sought to conceal her tears.

"It was my object," continued Kolschutzki, "to see you before, for I knew the pressing nature of my mission. It was only while hastening hither, that I learnt, with grief, his sudden arrest. I ran to the palace, and thence to his mansion; yet spite of my utmost exertions, I cannot gain access to my unhappy master, for a single moment. He is under the strictest guard, and, to-morrow, is to be conveyed, a state prisoner, to the fortress of Kuffstein in the Tyrol. He will never more leave it."

"Oh, merciful God!" cried Catherine, "to that horrible receptacle of woe!"

"Nothing is now left," said Kolschutzki, "but to fulfil his last wishes; and I am here to receive your commands. Would you like to forward some communication to the count?"

"Is it possible?—can that be done?" inquired Catherine.

"Nothing is impossible to a determined will, with courage and fidelity."

"I could wish him to know," returned Catherine, "that I feel the deepest gratitude, for his extreme kindness and solicitude for my safety; that I shall never cease to remember him, and offer up unceasing prayers, for his freedom and restoration to those friends, who so truly lament his misfortunes. He will know I allude to my unhappy sister, to whom I must hasten to unfold these afflicting tidings. May I beg of you to forward to her a letter from me, without delay?"

"Without the least difficulty," replied Kolschutzki; "the count gave me his lady's address; and I have already sent the despatches which he intrusted to me. But I must not be seen here; I dare not wait for it; I know the hour you set out from Vienna; and while passing the Red Tower, an aged-looking mendicant will accost you for alms; give him the letter, and you will put it into the hands of Kolschutzki." Saying this, and hearing some one approach, the faithful emissary took a respectful leave, with an assurance that she might depend on his keeping his appointment.

CHAPTER III.

The old family equipage was at length patched up, and in readiness,—one only of the four ancient steeds had died, during a town residence; and the veteran survivors of so unexpected a campaign stood with ears erect, and heads turned wistfully in the direction of the old baronial mansion. The good dowager's antique tire-women were already deposited, with two macaws, three monkeys, and as many aged lap-dogs, with a world of paraphernalia, in the huge baskets of the no less ponderous vehicle; the ladies were also safely encased, and the baroness, eager to escape "the doomed city," gave the awful word,—to fly.

Conrad, the old coachman, cast a rueful look from his seat at the cruel load of mortality behind him, then at his unhappy steeds, and then at his mistress, before stringing up his nerves to attempt a start. With infinite straining and toiling, the machine at length began to move, dragging its slow length along, till it reached Leopoldstadt, where a strange scene presented itself to the travellers'

eyes. Vehicles of every description, goods and chattels, women and children, were alike mingled in one confused mass, — consisting of fugitives, who, in their extreme terror, had blocked up the streets and pathways, uttering cries and lamentations, as if the Turks were already engaged in putting them to the sword.

As the great coach, at its regular funereal pace, came near, at each turn and jostle in the crowd, it began to creak, and grind, and groan in a most ominous manner. Old Conrad looked aghast; his steeds made more noise than the great bellows of a blacksmith's forge (two of them were confirmed "roarers"), and even the heart of Catherine began to quail, in the belief that every movement would be their last. But "Quick! quick! fly, Conrad! oh, fly!" was still the burden of her mother's song; "let us gallop to Konnenburgh as speedily as possible!" And what will not time and labour accomplish? — They passed the isles, and the second arm of the Danube, when, suddenly, there burst upon their view the mountain-tops of Kahlenberg and Leopoldsberg, all fearfully enveloped in flames.

Flying troops of Tartars, favoured by the darkness, had attained the heights, and fired the convent of the Camaldoli and the church of St. Leopold. The crackling of the flames mingled with the horrid shouts of the barbarians, and the cries of the holy men, whose white robes were seen floating in the wind, along the walls of the edifice, spreading horror far and near through the surrounding gloom. By the light of the flames, they could even be seen falling under the sacrilegious fury of

the invaders, or hurled into the burning ruins; — a sight followed by the most fearful cries and lamentations of the beholders, each imagining that a similar fate might be reserved for themselves. Self-preservation became now the only object: the carriages had no sooner succeeded in passing the first bridge, than all began to urge their horses to the uttermost; and Conrad, among the number, impelled by the incessant appeals of the poor baroness, for the first time in his life, showed no kind of mercy to his ancient baronial chivalry. But there are limits to the most strenuous efforts; — it was clear that the flogging, the roaring, the groaning, the heavy labouring, and creaking of the family vehicle, could not endure for ever. Gradually it swayed and stopped. Conrad again looked back, and declared that it was an impossibility, for the most willing of beasts to drag such an unconscionable load of mortal sins, with *them there* apes and screeching birds, any farther. His lady still protested and conjured him: Conrad relented, and, summoning all his heroism, and that of his horses, he struggled for another move; and the next moment brought the wheels in contact with the ruins of a wagon, which obstructed the way. Awful was the encounter; he sought to disengage himself; and soon brought matters to a crisis, by upsetting, with hideous crash and din, the entire concern. Extreme alarm and confusion, but no dislocated joints, were the result; for, such was the ponderous and steady character, both of steeds and vehicle, as to offer the most decided opposition to any sudden and violent motion, from whatever cause it might proceed. The

rumbling of packages, the jabberings of monkeys, and the shrieks of macaws, produced the chief part of the sensation and effect, upon this grand *finale* of their route. One by one, they were taken out of the mighty ruins of the family equipage, alive and unhurt; but not so was the reputation of old Conrad and his steeds, who hung their heads as if the last of human calamities had befallen them. What was to be done? — To ride was now out of the question; not a single traveller came to their assistance; and the noble-minded Catherine herself was on the brink of despair.

"We must return to Vienna, mamma, on foot, as quickly as possible!"

"To the doomed city! gracious heavens! the Turks are there! — Oh, never!"

"You forget, mamma, the city is well fortified; they will find it none so easy!" was the courageous girl's reply.

"Well! but they will reach it to-morrow, or the day after, at farthest."

"Yes; the walls, I dare say; but the place will stand a good siege!"

"But then we shall be sure to meet the Turks at the gates!"

"Let us try to get back before they reach; that is better than to sit in the open air, or seek shelter in villages which can afford us no protection."

"We had better resign ourselves to our fate then!" was the poor lady's reply; and it was in vain her daughter sought to inspire her with courage sufficient to move a step. The only answer she could obtain was — "I am resigned; let us die; the Lord have mercy upon us! Oh, those

horrid, horrid Turks! — what will become of us, I wonder? — shall we be killed or be made slaves?"

Catherine made no reply; her ear was intently fixed upon the sound of horses' hoofs at a distance, but every instant advancing rapidly towards them from an opposite direction to that of the city they had left. A light carriage, with four horses at full speed, at length appeared in sight; it drew nigh,—the horses were bathed in foam, and checked not their fiery career till brought close to the cumbrous remains of the old family vehicle. In a moment the traveller had alighted, to assist in opening a passage, wrapped in a large mantle which he threw aside; but perceiving several ladies in apparent distress, he hastened to ascertain the cause, when an exclamation of delight burst from Catherine's lips.

"Sandor!—dear Szlatinski!"

"My Catherine! dearest cousin!" was the answer, and the lovers were on the instant, locked in each other's embraces, with a joy too great for words.

"Surely," at length murmured the happy Catherine, disengaging herself from his fervent caress; "surely, Heaven has sent you in pity to us,—especially to poor mamma!"

"Yes, truly!" cried the lady of Volkersdorf; "did you ever expect, nephew, to witness a disaster in the family like this? Look at us! look at the carriage, the state carriage,—look at our coach horses,—look at old Conrad! he may well hang down his head. But where are you going, my dear boy; will you take us with you?"

"To Vienna, to be sure!" was the reply; "I have just left his imperial majesty at Stockerau; and may I ask, aunt, where you are going?"

"Not to Vienna, indeed!—you have not heard of our misfortunes. Do you know," she added, in a confidential whisper; "that the Turks are now at Vienna?" Sandor started back with an expression of horror and surprise.

"The Turks at Vienna! God in Heaven forbid!"

"No, no!" interrupted Catherine; "they are not there yet; and will not be for some time."

"Well!" replied Sandor, recovering his breath; "I thought it could not be; the bulwark of Christianity will never fall before the miscreant infidels, while a Pole or a Hungarian can wield a sword."

"You speak," exclaimed Catherine, in some surprise, "as if you were a soldier, Szlatinski."

"I *am* a soldier," returned her lover, eagerly; "I am captain of Hulans, in the regiment of King Sobieski himself."

"What!" exclaimed the baroness; "you serve the king of Poland,—you have become unfaithful to the best of emperors."

"What an idea, my dear aunt! we serve the same God, and the same cause; it is a good and a just one! But tell me, in the name of all the saints,—what do you here—at midnight—on foot; and in such a plight?"

"What do we, indeed," replied his aunt; "I am sure I don't know. It is our fate; but I will give the whole history of our misfortunes since we saw you!"—and she was beginning a strange rambling rhapsody, which he was obliged to break off.

"Tell it me in my carriage, dear aunt:—it is ill-

adapted for ladies; but it is worth a great many of these old demolished machines," pointing at the ancient family reliques, over which Conrad was mentally pronouncing the last funeral oration; his horses, as still as death, apparently joining in doing the last honours to their natural companion through life, however glad to get rid of the infernal luggage with which it had been loaded, inside and out.

"Sandor," said the baroness, mournfully, "you ought to speak with more respect of family affairs;" as her eye rested on the gilded pannel.

"Yes; and especially of the dead," he added with a smile, as his eye followed that of the countess, and then rested upon Conrad and his brutes.

"We are not dead, sir," said Conrad, looking up mournfully; "we are only resting—quite still after such hurly-burly, and the poor beasts are rather melancholy over the fall."

"The fall, indeed!" said the old lady; "I shall never forget it, Conrad."

"I think I could drive your ladyship back to Vienna! God willing," was Conrad's reply; "if we had a smith here, and a few poles and axles."

"That, I am sure, you never shall," returned the indignant lady; "if you had a hundred poles and axles. You may keep them for the Turks. You shall never drive that carriage, with me in it, any more."

"I don't think he will," interrupted Sandor, finding she was going to attack the old coachman; "let him mount my box, and we will lose no more time. Come, fear not,—Sobieski is in full march with his Poles;—Hungary,—all Germany is up; we shall have a glorious fight and victory; and

then I will talk to you, dear aunt, and to our sweet Catherine. Let us return to Vienna quickly. He read approval in the bright delicious glance of his fair cousin, whose whole heart warmed and leapt to the young hero as he spoke; such is the strange fascination of bravery and devotion over woman's love! That look thrilled through his frame, as she gave him her hand; he lifted her into his carriage, and then turning to her lady mother, inquired if she were desirous that they two should proceed alone; for if such were her determination, it could not be helped.

"Oh no! by no means; I shall go with my daughter;—oh dear! I shall never rest till father Isidor comes back, and I see poor Catherine safe in a nunnery;" and she seated herself by the side of the fair girl, as if she had wholly forgotten there were any Turks in the world. But the carriage was small, as well as light, and they were as close to each other, spite of all she could do, as any two loving travellers could be. Sandor's bosom beat high with delight,—one of his arms encircled his fair cousin,—her hand was in his, and they were absorbed in a dumb conversation of hearts and souls, worth whole volumes of mere words.

"Who could have persuaded me, this morning," he at length observed, "that I could be made thus happy to-night?"

"And where were you this morning, nephew, if I may ask?"

"To be sure you may; I was on the high road from Silesia. I had been to see the good emperor Leopold."

"And why do not you say, *our* good emperor,

sir! but I suppose you are in the service of a foreign prince, and no longer his subject."

"You are hard upon me, aunt; I serve in the army which is at hand, to serve and to save him. You know I have estates in Poland; yet it is not that; it is my admiration — my veneration — my heart's devotion to the great Sobieski,—not only as a great monarch, but as a far greater man."

"All very fine, that!" retorted the old lady, "but I remember that my dear deceased baron, often told me a good deal about the inhuman cruelties of your hero, committed at Chor-zym. Eh?"

"That is perhaps the sole thing which shades a little the lustre of his fame; and there is much to excuse even that little. The Turks had treated his family with inhumanity; he avenged the manes of his sire, of his dearest relatives; and hence, too, his inextinguishable hatred against the infidels,—the enemies of Christianity, and of the world."

"He is an instrument in the hands of Providence; if his hatred helps to protect us, it is so far good," observed the baroness in a solemn tone.

"Yes," added Catherine; "and the breaking down of the great family coach seems providential too; without that we should have been at Konnenburgh, and cousin Sandor at Vienna, by this time."

"Yes," exclaimed Sandor, "thank God, it is broke, and no longer of any use."

"What folly, what wickedness to talk so," grumbled the old lady; "to bless Heaven, indeed, that we met with an accident that stopped our

flight, though of course we are glad to see your cousin Sandor, my dear."

"Not so much of a flight, mamma; we did not go above a mile an hour, I think," said Catherine with a smile, "and I dare say, the way to Konnenburgh; was dreadfully impeded by similar accidents."

"It is, indeed," observed Sandor; "the confusion and wretchedness exceeds all belief; it is a most fortunate event, that I met with you, I am sure."

"It matters not; I shall set out again to-morrow," interrupted the baroness; "I dare say, the road will be clear enough by then."

"Oh, yes! for the Turks," added Sandor, with a malicious smile; "for if Vienna were to fall, there can be no security in other parts."

"Heaven help us! I suppose then, we must resign ourselves to our fate in the doomed city," said the lady; "we shall all become slaves or victims to the barbarous Turks;—what a fate! there we shall see that terrible grand signor;—that horrid serail,—and I know not what!"

"Let us hope better things!" said Sandor, very earnestly.

"Oh, yes! let us hope," repeated Catherine in a fervent and supplicatory tone. "While thus conversing, they approached the city—where obstacles of every kind began to impede their progress. But the uniform of a Polish officer of distinction, every where opened a path, and excited the attention of all ranks; arriving as he did, express from Warsaw, with the military colours waving from his courier's standard. The hope that their brave deliverers,

headed by the first warrior of his age, were in full march from Poland, seemed to allay the general panic, and to stem the tide of fugitives, rushing to escape through every outlet from Vienna. His carriage was followed by an immense throng of inquirers, who filled the air with acclamations, till it stopped at the door of Madame von Preysing. Both Catherine and the baroness were deeply sensible of this mark of kindness; for their deliverer had not yet waited upon the commander of the city, being resolved himself to see them restored in safety to their anxious friends. His lovely cousin thanked him in a manner the most gratifying to his feelings; and while the silly old lady threw herself into the arms of her friend, half distracted between fright and folly, Sandor pressed his beloved one to his bosom, and besought her to resist, to the uttermost, the design of immuring her in a convent, and blasting his hopes for ever. Then, with one rapturous kiss, he tore himself away, to hasten the delivery of his dispatches, not without the promise of returning early on the morrow.

It was long that night ere Catherine closed her eyes; the sweet retrospect of the few last hours of that fearfully agitating day, held her thoughts as if spell-bound by some new and irresistible power. The same vision hovered round her pillow, when, at last she sunk in slumber;—and they were not visions of the cloister;—for she dreamed only of Szlatinski,—now rushing to her rescue,—and now pouring in her ear renewed protestations of passionate, unalterable affection. But she awoke to sad and fearful realities;—all the circumstances attending upon a sudden and terrific siege, and a struggle for

freedom, religion, and even existence. Houses were demolished on all sides; the stones of the streets were torn up, and barricades erected at narrow intervals, as if intended to dispute the imperial city, inch by inch, with the hordes of barbarous infidels. Every advantageous spot was converted into a little citadel; loop-holes were made in the houses, which were provided with different kinds of defence, in order to prolong the contest, should the walls be carried by storm. As Catherine looked forth, she beheld a troop of students, with drums beating and colours flying, to call forth all those who chose to enrol themselves in their sacred band. The officers of police went knocking from door to door, to learn whether the private dwellings were all supplied with water, in case of sudden conflagration, and with leather and woollen bags to resist the balls. The different trades were toiling night and day in their several departments, and the strange concert of wild and terrific sounds fell fearfully upon the ear, breathing only of death and destruction. The heart of Catherine sunk within her; and, alas! Sandor could not remain near her; he must hurry to join the foremost ranks, and lead on his regiment of heroic Poles, to fresh fields of victory, or perish before the ruins of the Christian capital. She knew it; and she burst into an agony of tears, as she thought of their final parting; her woman's heart of love conjuring up a thousand appalling perils, from which she conceived it impossible he would ever escape. While thus absorbed in passionate woe, her chamber door was flung suddenly open; and pale and haggard as the ghost of famine, the poor baroness ran towards her,

with difficulty articulating, "They come! they come!!"

"Who come?" exclaimed Catherine, shocked at the ghastly appearance of her mother, who threw herself on the couch in a fit of the most determined despair, hiding her face under the bed-clothes, and still muttering, "They come! they come!"

"Who—who? for mercy's sake, speak, mamma! oh, speak to me!"

"Turks to be sure, you foolish girl!" cried the countess, jumping up again, half angry she should be misunderstood on such a point:—"the Turks, I say! who else should come? They are here; they are walking in the town. I always said it would come to pass."

"Impossible, madam! the gates are all closed, and well barricaded."

"They have just knocked them all down with their horrid cannon!"

"Well, mamma; but we should have heard them, at least."

"I wonder how you can dispute with me!—don't you hear their music now? eh, don't you?—what is that?—and that?—and that?"

Catherine listened, and she certainly heard music: it was that of a march: "it is an Austrian regiment; I know the march: pray, mamma, try to compose yourself, if that be the sole ground of your alarm."

"How stupid you are, Catherine; when I tell you that our whole army has been massacred,—destroyed. They must, therefore, be Turks; they are Turks, and we are undone!" The poor lady then wrung her hands, pulled her hair, and throw-

ing herself upon the floor, twisted and distorted her venerable body into as many ludicrous forms and attitudes, as the best practised merry-andrew of the most polished court. Her nephew, at that moment, entering the room, she mistook him for a savage Tartar, and hid her face once more in her hands; and when undeceived, her joy became as extravagant as her fear had before been; for she was informed of the arrival of the Austrian cavalry, under command of the good Duke of Lorraine. Hardly had Szlatinski re-assured her, when the lady of Dunerwald also joined them, calling out with a joyous air, "Good news, good news! my friends! the duke has arrived; he has come to protect us; the people are all in a whirl of joy!"

"He protect us! he cannot do it!" insisted the baroness, still incredulous; "and I wish to Heaven, I were safe back at my dear castle of Clamm. I wish I were only out of the doomed city."

"Indeed, mamma, I believe it would be the best, if you terrify yourself so."

"Yes; I perceive you wish me to go, my dear, because I have frightened you a little; but I have promised father Isidor, that I would see you placed safely in a nunnery; and we must think of that before I go; it can be done while your cousin Sandor is here;" saying which, the restless and troubled old lady flung out of the room in a pet.

"There goes my aunt," observed Szlatinski; "and I am sorry for it; for I was just going to ask, if you would like to accompany me, and see the passage of our brilliant cavalry, as well as to share the public joy."

"How I should wish it of all things!" exclaimed

Catherine; "but I sadly fear it is impossible;" and so she found it, the baroness resisting the united intreaties of her friends, until Madame de Preysing at length, extorted a reluctant consent for Catherine, upon the express conditions of accompanying her, and never for a moment permitting her to be out of her sight. Catherine was delighted.

Upon their way, Sandor acquainted his fair cousin, that he had seen the commander, Count Stahremberg, and that he was to hold himself in readiness to set out early the next morning.

"To-morrow!—say not so, dear Sandor; surely not to-morrow! Have I not one happy day?"

"Ah, Catherine! you know not the life of a soldier, and of a minister, too; how full of anxiety and care."

"Alas I know it not! Szlatinski: but I know what it is to be left, abandoned by those dear to me, to feel myself alone. And you too, can form no idea, how much I am in need of a friend, of a protector, of—of, my cousin;" she added in a more hesitating tone.

Szlatinski was all gratitude and tenderness, seeking by every method in his power, to console and re-assure her. He directed her attention to the splendid edifice of St. Stephen, the venerable and imposing appearance of which, with the treasures of art it contained, were an object of wonder to the stranger, and of pride to the inhabitants of the imperial city. While engaged in admiring its architectural and other beauties, a young officer, remarkable for his fine figure, and handsome features, joined their party, and accosted the lady of Dunerwald. He wore the imperial uniform; his name was Scalvinoni; he was first aide-de-camp

of Count Stahremberg; and as such presented to Catherine and her cousin. From the moment he beheld her, he seemed struck with the charms of one whom he pronounced, in a whisper to his fair friend, just loud enough to be heard, the loveliest woman he had ever beheld; and he began to pay her the most marked attention. His manner was at once the most captivating and respectful; he was considered the handsomest man of his age; and Szlatinski, who could bear no comparison in point of person with him, seemed greatly annoyed by his continued assiduity, and gallant demeanour.

At length, Scalvinoni offered to conduct the party to a much more advantageous station, which, as first aide-de-camp, he had the power to do, from which they might behold the whole army pass in files before them. There was so much good-nature and affability in his manner, that the offer was somewhat indiscreetly accepted by the lady of Dunerwald; and it was so disposed, that Catherine was partly under the escort of the noble young aide-de-camp.

During the entire scene, he ceased not to make himself as agreeable as possible; a deportment as much contrasted, as his fine person, with the sombre air, and quick, and abrupt, if not jealous words, and glances of the less imposing Szlatinski. Upon the party retiring, the handsome officer would not be satisfied without seeing the ladies safe back to their mansion, where Sandor, also, with a cold abstracted air, bade the ladies adieu, and withdrew along with the handsome Austrian. There was something cold and harsh in the farewell of her cousin, which struck both Catherine and her

friends; the latter rallied her upon her conquest of the young hussar; and as if conscience-smitten for a moment, however slight the cause, she withdrew to her own room, far more wretched than she had left it. She felt a strange presentiment of some danger, as she recalled to mind the jealous indignant looks which passed between the two officers upon taking leave of her; and she blamed herself for having one moment lent her ear to the captivating flattery of Scalvinoni. She passed a wretched day, and, absorbed in these painful feelings, she scarcely heard a carriage drive rapidly up to the door, from which alighted the object of all her conflicting hopes and fears, and in a few minutes she found herself in the presence of Szlatinski. He was in his travelling-dress, looked excessively pale and hurried, and said that being suddenly summoned away, he was come to take final leave.

"Is it so indeed!" cried the startled girl, "and have you already transacted business with Count Stahremberg?"

"I am come from the count's this instant; and I must depart."

"You look ill and unhappy, Sandor, how did he receive you?'

"How should he receive me?" replied Szlatinski; "if we do our duty, a superior officer ought always to be satisfied."

"But I have heard that Stahremberg is abrupt in his manner."

"I have no reason to complain of him," returned her cousin, coolly.

"And of whom, then?" asked Catherine, timidly, and in an anxious tone.

"Of whom?—of no one," he replied, with an expression of forced indifference. "I make no complaint; circumstances compel me to leave Vienna this evening, and I must again call at the governor's for my despatches."

"This evening! oh, Sandor, and you can speak of it thus coldly?"

"It is the lot of us soldiers, you know, Catherine," taking her hand in his; "the count has given orders for the bridges to be broken, and I must first leave the city."

"Yes; but they are not to be destroyed till to-morrow; don't you remember Scalvinoni told us so; and he knows all that is done?"

Her lover's brow grew dark, and he was silent. At length he said, "Oh! I dare say you will not want company when I am gone? Scalvinoni will doubtless call upon the baroness, and give you tidings of all that is taking place; for he knows every thing," he added, in a more bitter and ironical tone.

Catherine started. "Szlatinski!" she exclaimed, fixing her eyes intently upon his, "you seem much changed; there is something I do not understand; something has disturbed you; tell me what?"

"I cannot tell you, Catherine; but you will perhaps hear of it."

"How you distress me! oh, Sandor, you *once* told me that you loved me."

"*Once* told you!" repeated her lover, his brow growing yet darker.

"Yes, you once looked on me as your betrothed; is that all over?"

"Ah! you wish it then, ungrateful, ungenerous Catherine!"

"What is it I hear? I no longer know you, Sandor! Are you jesting, or do you really want to nsist — to destroy me? Alas! then no refuge is left me but a convent."

"It is not the convent, I fear! No, you have no thoughts of that."

"And what then? in Heaven's name! speak what you think?"

"I need not — ask your own heart; it will teach you how to avoid the convent; they will not easily force you to take the veil."

"They will! and you — you too will drive me to do it; you know not half I have suffered; — the tears and entreaties of my mother; the threats of father Isidor — and he is expected again every moment. It was for your sake, and this is my reward!"

"Hear me, Catherine! has your affection for me never undergone a change? I charge you speak —has never a treac' erous thought or wish swerved from the woman's faith you vowed me?"

"So help me Heaven! — but what is it, Sandor, you would say?"

"That I perhaps behold you for the last time! you have loved—you still think, possibly, you love me; but after our excursion of this morning, it is my duty, ere I leave, to put you on your guard against the designs of one of the most daring, as well as the most successful and captivating, as he is called, of men. I like not the lady of Dunerwald, and her introductions; — do you understand me now?—did you not understand me before?"

"What dare you insinuate! what idea have you

formed of me?" cried the agitated girl, indignant at the tone of his strange question.

"None that ought to offend you. I am merely speaking of possibilities—when I am gone?"

"Do you wish to part, then; to consign me to a convent; or shall I renew the vows already made? for Heaven's sake, speak!"

"Your word would be enough, Catherine; but is it not folly to pledge your heart and feelings for the future? You well know how I have loved you. From very childhood I was distractedly fond of you; I was your early and sole companion;—my affection grew with us,—when a girl you were the day-dream of my youth,—I was distracted with my passion for you,—your father saw it;—and when you burst upon me in all your ripened, irresistible beauties, you know that father gave you to me—you were my betrothed bride,—I felt you were dear to me as the life blood of my heart,—I never suspected you for a moment. It was I opposed your being immured in a cloister; and I will still do it; and spite of all, you shall be free, Catherine; even though you bestow yourself upon another!"

"Another!" exclaimed Catherine, in evident alarm,—"this is terrible, Sandor! have I merited such an accusation?"

"Remember Count Zriny, cousin; and do not be too confident."

Catherine hung her head and wept. "I thought," she murmured, "that you had forgiven me—I never—never loved any one as I love you now;" and she dropped her head upon his shoulder, and sobbed aloud. What magic was in those words!

He snatched her to his bosom, and covered her with his tears and caresses. Their lips met, and with one long rapturous kiss the reconciliation was completed and sealed for ever. It was now for the first time the breathless girl discovered that her lover's arm was in a sling; the blood fled from her cheeks—she could not speak; but fixed her speaking and anxious eyes upon her lover. "It is nothing," he said; "it is all over now,—Scalvinoni lives; and I no longer fear him."

"Oh heavens! and you have fought then; you are wounded!"

"It is nothing, I repeat; and you say nothing of Scalvinoni!" and the enraptured lover once more overwhelmed her with his tender and grateful caresses. "He is safe," he went on; "and you delight me because you made no inquiry, dear Catherine."

"And what madness could have urged you to so wild an attempt?"

"The bare idea of losing the most charming of women, sweet Catherine; and now, welcome fortune, and welcome war in its sternest mood; I bear about me a spell in the love and prayers of my betrothed bride!"

"Yes, dear, dear Sandor; I can tell you now,—it is long since I have daily gone to the oratory of St. Stephen, and ceased not to weary Heaven with supplications for your safety:—they were heard."

"But it is yours we must now think of, dearest; for father Isidor is at hand; his influence over your mother is without bounds; his power,—and in Vienna too,—almost irresistible. There is only one method of defeating his object; forgive me for now insisting upon it; for if I leave you alone here,

you are lost. They have means of compelling you to enter the cloister, and the sole resistance we can offer is our speedy union,—you must be mine ere I quit the city."

"I thought you told me, you were setting out on the moment," replied the agitated Catherine.

"I *can* delay it till the morrow! You will,—you must give me your hand, if you wish to save yourself from the slow consuming sorrows of a cell; and the same chapel that received your supplications for me, shall witness the holy ceremony. You can go at the hour of prayer; and I have a priest and friend ready to perform the blessed office. It will now be seen if you really love me."

"Cruel, cruel Szlatinski,—what can I,—what ought I to say?—and mamma not even to know of it.—Oh! indeed, indeed, I dare not do it."

"But you will; or you behold me, dear Catherine, for the last time."

"Unkind Sandor!—but be it all as you will;—you shall not reproach me,—I cannot bear it:" and the gentle girl murmured out her blushing consent upon her lover's bosom.

That evening they were united in the oratory of St. Stephen's, and the farewell scene of the ensuing morning, between the young bride and her husband, presented a strange contrast to the meeting of the lovers on the preceding day. It was full of confiding affection and tenderness, and if Catherine shed tears, they were no longer tears of unmingled bitterness. She no longer, moreover, dreaded a convent; her step was light; her heart was buoyant with love and hope, and a spirit of deep and quiet joy, inspired every word and look, and threw a

fresh grace and charm over her whole appearance. Alas, she little dreamed how brief would be the hopes she nourished, as she watched the receding form of the being she most loved, hastening to mingle once more in the stern array of war. Scarcely had Szlatinski passed the threshold of the mansion, when he saw as hastily approaching it the figure of the very man who had excited his deadly jealousy, and had met him in bitter strife; and the expression of triumphant love which passed over his face, was as quickly succeeded by a pang. As they approached each other, a smile of recognition gave way to one of half defiance, and it seemed doubtful whether either would be the first to speak. But Szlatinski accosted him, and held out his hand:

"Let the past be forgotten; — I was, I fear, in fault yesterday; — I owe it to you to confess it; —you are going to the Baroness of Volkersdorf,— there can be no misconception now."

"I am going to see Catherine Volkersdorf, sir; —I know not why I should not,— I ——"

"Then I can tell you, she is engaged,—affianced to me,—and has long been so."

"Perhaps longer than she will continue so," was the somewhat ironical reply; "'in love and war,' you know, sir; I need not quote for one of your learning and experience."

"You are pleased to jest, — but this is a serious subject; and I expect that you will give me your word of honour as a soldier and a gentleman, that you will desist from visiting here."

"That I assuredly will not;—I shall visit her as often as I please."

"That you dare not, and shall not do, sir! I

consider the young lady as my wife. She is mine, and mine she shall be!"

"You should add, so long as it may be the lady's good pleasure, and perhaps mine. — I will have no dictation except from the lovely Catherine's own lips; and I do not think she will be so very cruel."

"Villain! coward! draw!" exclaimed Szlatinski; "but stop! follow me where I may chastise your insolence without fear of interruption."

"Vain, presuming Pole!" retorted the Austrian: "thy life shall be the forfeit of those words, and then who shall gainsay me to win and wear thy pretty mistress, and tame her, like my hawk, till she obey my every call?"

"Poor boaster! seek not to put off thy evil hour; my rapier's point shall answer thee."

With quick step and angry eye, the fiery rivals traversed the streets, till they passed the suburbs, where Szlatinski's carriage was waiting his arrival. Here laying down their sabres, Szlatinski took from a sword-case, two rapiers of pure Toledan manufacture, of exactly equal length, and very firmly, as well as brilliantly set. He next called his confidential valet, and bidding him follow, withdrew to the skirts of an adjacent wood, where the green-sward was firm and dry, and giving his rival the choice of position, deliberately began to strip. His rival did the same.

"This officer," addressing his domestic, "has no friend here; you are a man of honour, Kolschutzki! and I need say no more; you will provide him my swiftest horse if he survive, and you will hasten with my despatches for Warsaw."

"I will, my lord; — I understand you! but is

there no way," he added, in a low tone to himself, as he measured with gloomy eye, the imposing height and sinewy frame of Scalvinoni, "my master is a dead man."

"And now, sir," exclaimed Szlatinski, "one of us leaves not this spot alive! I will give you no quarter, and I will take none."

"You shall not, sir; you shall be satisfied!—do you wish to pray?"

The young Pole's reply was at the point of his weapon; hand to hand, and foot to foot, commenced the fierce and deadly assault. All that individual skill and strength could summon into mortal action, was displayed to view. The length of arm, and vigour of the Austrian, gave him fearful odds; but his rival had calculated upon it, and preserved his coolness. Still he gave ground, as if unable to resist the fury of his rival's onset, who had made several passes, and seemed confident of success. Receiving and parrying his thrusts, the Pole still acted on the defensive, till irritated and half breathless, the Austrian attempted to beat down his guard, and wounded his rival in the left arm. Szlatinski, indignant at the base attempt, and the sight of his own blood, changed his plan, no longer confining his efforts merely to elude those of his adversary. He stood his ground, returning lounge for lounge,—the combat was equal and deadly. He several times wounded Scalvinoni, and pressing the attack with incessant vigour, caused the Austrian to give ground in turn. Aware that breath and strength were alike failing him, he made desperate efforts to recover his ground, and at last passed his sword

through Szlatinski's side, and in the same lounge received his rival's in the groin, before he had time to draw out his own rapier. The Austrian fell, leaving his weapon actually sticking in the body of his hated rival.

Kolschutzki making a signal for the rest of his lord's suite to come forward, ran and caught him in his arms as he staggered a few steps, as if attempting to reach his faithful servant.

"My poor, poor master!" he exclaimed, "you are sadly, deadly hurt, I fear; oh, my God! what shall we do?"

"Draw the rapier," said his master, "and I shall then be better; but tell Catherine, if I die, how I loved—how I thought only of her—requested life for her alone. Now draw the weapon."

"No, beware of that," cried Kolschutzki, "till the surgeon is at hand to stem the blood, or you might die instantly."

"Then convey me as I am, for I should like to live to see my beloved wife once more; let no one draw it out, my friend, but be quick—carry me to the mansion of the Lady Dunerwald. Yet first see that a surgeon is called to yonder wounded man; he fell first. It was for her I fought—and for her I conquered."

His orders were speedily obeyed; he was borne back to the city, into the mansion he had that morning left in the full bloom and vigour of manhood. At the moment he was brought in, she for whom he thus suffered, was perusing with fond and passionate devotion, some of Sandor's early letters to her. A noise was heard in the hall, strange voices—confusion—lamentation; and at length

shrieks broke upon her ear; and her mother, with looks of terror, and dishevelled tresses, burst into the room.

"You must come — you must see him before he dies; he says he cannot breathe his last sigh without seeing you. Oh! make haste! Sandor, my dear nephew,—he is killed!"

Catherine heard no more; one wild-piercing cry burst from her lips, and she fell senseless at her mother's feet.

CHAPTER IV.

The 14th of July had scarcely dawned, when the thunder of the cannon on the ramparts, from the gate of Slubenthor, to that of Carinthia, startled the citizens of Vienna from their slumbers, announcing that the dreaded enemy were under her walls. Some hurried to the bastions, others mounted the roofs of houses, and the towers and churches teemed with the living mass, all eager to ascertain the latest tidings, and what they had to hope or to fear.* The terrific spectacle of the immense armies of the infidels, spread far and wide over the plains, presented itself to their view. The fire had been opened upon their advanced guard, which had pushed as far as St. Mark's, and extended itself over the heights, and behind the buildings, which had fallen a prey to the flames during the preceding night. Hordes of Tartars could be perceived even as far as the mountains bordering on the March, and the Zeytha, and to the right of the declivities of the Wienenberg. The whole vicinity

* The whole of what follows is strictly historical.

seemed alive with moving columns of Ottomans, with the dark terrific array of the Janissaries in the van. Cavalry, infantry, camels, and oxen yoked to wagons, and armed chariots, offered a strange, appalling picture to the eye. The fields,—each ear of corn appeared as if transformed into points of steel, and every bush or tree into a horseman. It struck the beholder, as a thing impossible to resist so mighty a multitude, provided with every means of destruction, which war, with havock and desolation in her rear, could supply. What was a handful of Christians cooped up within their walls, to meet the onset of more than two hundred thousand of veteran musselmans, with hosts of Tartars in reserve? Already the active marshalling of the formidable enemy for the attack, was perceived from the ramparts of the city. Some appeared directed to open lines and batteries; others were constructing floating bridges, and clearing the banks and passes of the river. The barbarian camp, with the grand vizier, surrounded by his pachas and agas, in splendid equipage, and decorated with all the pomp and riches of the East, dazzled and bewildered the view. The commander's tents were pitched close to the gardens of Count Traubson; since become the barracks of the imperial Hungarian guard. The pavilion was like a palace, and abounded in Asiatic luxury, and all the elegancies and conveniences of royal life; it was decorated in the colour of Mahomet—a rich green, with gold and silver borders. The tents of the pachas were raised opposite the gates of the city, and in a brief space the entire country round appeared covered with them, like one immense mov-

ing town surrounding the capital, as the waves of the sea embosom some little island.

Suddenly a smart cannonade from the banks of the Danube, sending clouds of smoke and flame into the air, drew all eyes in that direction; and strong detachments of Turks were seen passing the arm of the river, swimming, fording, and in boats. They were encountered by a division of imperial cavalry stationed at Leopoldstadt and at Pratur, and the contest soon grew warm. But the imperialists were soon out numbered, and the citizens perceived with grief that they were compelled to retreat. They hastily passed the last bridge connected with the isles of the Danube, and broke it down behind them, so that now all communication with the Austrian army was cut off.

The Turks subsequently took possession of the whole of the isles; destroyed the buildings of Leopoldstadt; set fire to the *Favorita*, the emperor's favourite villa, and pillaged every thing which the poor inhabitants had not previously removed. Among the sufferers was the faithful Kolschutzki, who had there invested his little property, the loss of which, however, grieved him less than the arrest of his former master, Count Zriny, and the wounds of the brave Szlatinski. He obtained permission of the latter, to enter a company of volunteers, headed by a French colonel, until such time as Szlatinski should be sufficiently recovered,—for his wound had not proved fatal, — again to take the field, and call for his personal services.

Before evening, the entire camp of the infidels had been completed, and even decorated, before the walls of Vienna. A sort of herald was then

seen approaching the gates, who threw down a roll of paper, upon the counterscarp of the ramparts, which contained an insolent summons of immediate surrender. It was carried to the commander, who did not deign to return a reply. Shortly after the enemy commenced operations; opened his trenches, and made his line of approach parallel with the imperial castle. The danger which threatened Vienna, was at length realized; its inhabitants had relied upon being relieved in a few days by the allied army, assembled on the opposite side of the Danube; and which it was expected, when reinforced, would pass the river, and giving battle to the infidels, compel them at all events to raise the siege. A gloomy morning, succeeded a fearfully tempestuous night; such a storm had seldom burst even over the mountainous districts, which lay between Austria and the Tyrol; and thick clouds enveloped the hills, the passes of which still reverberated with the deep, hollow moanings of the dying blasts. The dark, restless waves of the Wolfgang lake fretted, and lashed themselves far into the massy rocks, encompassing it on all sides; while a veil of deep mists, concealed the base and declivities of the lower range of hills, over which the peaks of the giant mountains, stretched far away into the calm clear space. The thunder muttered at intervals, and sudden gleams of light burst athwart the half visible gloom, and all around, bore sad witness to the fearful night of the angry spirit of the mountain storm. The autumn was but begun, yet every thing wore a wild and wintry aspect, and even

flakes of snow fell over the city, and sent a strange foreboding chill to the hearts of the boldest.

One solitary bark, in which sat two travellers, was at this time making its way through the troubled waters of the lake; one of them appeared an elderly man, tall and gaunt, wrapped in a black cloak, and by the shape of his hat, his collar, and a rosary which hung from his neck, could be no other than an ecclesiastic. His companion was a beautiful lady, apparently not more than twenty or twenty-two years of age. She was extremely pale, and grief sat upon her lovely features, and the tear was in her eye. The victim of some secret sorrow, a deep sigh escaped her, as she gazed up at the dark, rocky banks that lay around her, and then upon the waters, as if musing on the peaceful slumbers which might be found in its cavern depths.

The voice of one of the boatman broke upon her reverie, addressing himself to the ecclesiactic: "There you see Mount Falkenstein, and there,—pointing with his oar, upon the summit of the rocks,—is the habitation of St. Wolfgang."

"My son," replied the holy man, "that is very unlikely, many ages have elapsed, since that saintly man lived, and died amidst these scenes."

"Alas! who was he?" inquired the unhappy lady.

"A preacher of the Christian faith, madam," replied the priest, "an apostle among the heathens, who then inhabited these parts. To his efforts, and those of Colmannus, his companion, is chiefly owing our knowledge of Christianity, and

the germs of our civilization here. Their lives were a living witness, and their doctrine that of redemption from human sin; they reformed their fellow-beings during life, and inspired them with peace at the hour of death."

"How good, how noble!" replied the lady; "what a reproach to the sanguinary career of conquerors, and statesmen, as they are called; lives like theirs, indeed; so useful, so truly laudable, are alone deserving of the honours, too long bestowed upon kings and warriors; who impiously take upon themselves to vie with Providence, and become the rulers of human action and events."

"It is therefore," replied the priest, "that man, —that animated atom,—should refrain from all rash projects, and humble himself before a holy providence, in the station he is placed; to do all the good in his power, and pray for light to guide his path aright."

"But suppose," observed the lady quickly, "he thinks he recognises the hand of Heaven, and feels called upon to act?"

"Madam!" interrupted the priest, "he must not consult either his own heart, or his own mad wishes; it is easy to mistake the voice of the passions, for the voice of Providence. Madam, the Almighty has other means at his disposal, to make known his holy will; but it requires a guiltless and pious spirit to read the signs and tokens of his power."

"And what are those signs?" inquired the lady doubtingly.

"That your intents, madam, be in nothing contradictory to the sacred duties laid down in Holy

Writ;—that you feel a conscience at peace with itself, and that you maintain a perpetual struggle against sin, the world, and the devil." The lady bent down her eyes, and made no reply. They were now passing a point of land which projected into the lake, upon the summit of which lay prostrate a huge oak, rent by the lightning during the tempest of the preceding night.

"The thunder-bolt has done its work there," observed one of the boatmen, who had appeared remarkably attentive to the conversation which had just passed. "'Tis pity! I have seen him towering over the waters there these fifty years agone."

"That, indeed, is *his* fate!" exclaimed the lady, gazing on the monarch oak with a wild abstracted air; "he too, hath been smitten by the bolt of Heaven in his glowing prime,—in all the splendour and vigour of his mind. And he will never rise again. Oh! it is dreadful;—frightful to contemplate!" and she covered her face and wept.

"Was it not the hand of God which smote him?" inquired the priest. "Learn resignation, madam; dark and inscrutable are his paths; let us receive his chastisement with submission, and adore him!"

"You are right, father!" exclaimed the aged boatman; "there is no other rule of life;—we must adore him, and pray without ceasing. What other can we do, when this wild and stormy water keeps still devastating our little fields, — when the snow-storm and wintry winds carry away our cottage roofs,—when the summer hail, like shot, beats down our harvest, — the lightning levels our trees; — what can we do but pray? and St. Wolfgang, no doubt, hears our prayers."

"Happy those," said the lady, "who possess so much simple faith."

"Amen!" rejoined the Priest; "it is the true peace which God vouchsafes us, without any reference to St. Wolfgang."

"What!" exclaimed the boatman, with surprise, — "don't you believe St. Wolfgang is still the inhabitant of yonder cliffs over the mountain? Well, well," he added smiling; "he is none the less there, whether you think so or not. How would he answer us, think you, when we call to him, if he did not live there?"

"Answer you;" observed the priest, "my son, do not deceive thyself."

"We cannot, please you, good father," said the second boatman; "we are so often putting questions to him, and he so often answers us — loud enough, — that there is no mistaking him by no manner of means. Only you must speak to him with right hearty faith."

"Assuredly!" said the monk; "but how does he answer you?"

"Why, holy father! that you had best hear;— suppose you were just to put a question to him or so;—hearing is believing, sir."

"*I* have nothing to ask of *him*; besides, I don't think it is permitted for us thus to tempt Providence."

"Does the saint reply," inquired the lady, "to any questions you ask? Will he tell us, I wonder, what will be our fate!"

"I cannot tell what your ladyship means by that. All I know is, the saint will answer 'yes,' or 'no,' when you ask."

"I should like, of all things, to hear him," then; —"will he answer 'yes,' or 'no,' when I inquire if what I so much wish will ever come to pass? If he be really a saint, he ought to know it."

"Madam!" interrupted the priest, in a severe tone,—"are you not ashamed to indulge this weak, if not criminal curiosity."

"The unhappy," replied the lady in a mournful tone, "may be inquisitive and rash; when theïr last hopes hang upon a single question, and when the next hour may decide their destiny. But it is not—I only wish the boatman to try it. Pray, good man, ask the saint whether that for which I am incessantly praying to Heaven will be granted or not?"

"Good lady; —you shall have his answer directly." They ceased to ply the oar for a moment, —all was still. The old boatman stood up, and called in a loud voice: "Saint Wolfgang! —will this lady get what she wishes; —yes! or no?" a silence of about a second ensued; and then all at once from the summit of the mountain was heard a clear "No!"—and "no—no!" was repeated from every neighbouring hill around.*

The wretched, and now superstitious Ludmilla,— for it was she, — trembled, as the echo caught her ear. She felt as if her sentence had been just pronounced; and it was with some difficulty father Isidor succeeded in persuading her that the whole was merely the reverberation of a sound.

* This singular echo may still be heard upon Mount Falkenstein, in the Tyrol, and along the banks of Lake Wolfgang; it takes up the last syllable, and a succession of echoes repeat it in a manner that favours the illusion.

"Yes, it may be as you say," she replied; "but what led the boatman to fix upon the 'No,' rather than the 'Yes?' Alas! it is of bad augury. Could mere chance, think you, have suggested it?"

The priest, on hearing these words, addressed her with severe voice and contracted brow, declaring that such sentiments were invariably the result of a want of true religion, the indulgence of unchecked passions, bad writings, and the society of free-thinkers. His lecture, indeed, continued until they reached the village and church of St. Wolfgang itself, containing such a collection of his miracles, and stranger traditions, the fame of which has drawn so many pilgrims to his shrine.

All was now in preparation for receiving the emperor Leopold, on his retreat from the capital, with due magnificence. Upon touching land, they first proceeded to join in the celebration of mass at St. Wolfgang's; and it was no sooner concluded, than father Isidor, approaching Ludmilla, said, in a low voice, "your name has been announced to his majesty, who has arrived here, and he listens to your petition for an audience."

The lady expressed her deep gratitude: it was for this she had braved the inclemencies of the season, and the perils of crossing the stormy lake after such a night; and she arose from her knees with an expression of hope and confidence, long strangers to her heart. She felt as if she were not yet wholly abandoned by Heaven, and followed her conductor in silent prayer. The decisive hour was come: she was to appear before the sovereign who had been betrayed by her consort; and she had to meet his just anger, at the moment she was

about to solicit a fresh favour at his hands. She was humbled to the dust; her once proud spirit betook itself to prayer, and tears, and repentance; yet not unmingled with complaints and doubts. She leaned tremblingly on the arm of father Isidor, who, stern as he was, was touched with her extreme agitation, and sought to re-assure her, by praising the extreme affability of the good Leopold—the father of his subjects.

They were received with marked attention by the royal attendants, and conducted through a spacious gallery, of antique appearance, with oaken floors, and polished doors of the same wood. All was massy and plain, little betokening the residence of a great monarch; and it was chiefly the criminal projects of Count Zriny, which had constrained him to seek refuge in a gloomy asylum so little in unison with his known habits and tastes.

"Let us go back, good father," she exclaimed, as the painful idea crossed her mind; "I shall never be able to bear the eye of the emperor:" and she would have turned round and fled. But the chamberlain, Baron Guttenthein, would not permit it; he entreated her to be composed; he knew Count Zriny, and he knew the emperor well, and she had no real cause for alarm. He led her hastily forward, and, throwing open the door, brought her into the emperor's presence. It was a plain apartment, almost wholly destitute of ornaments; but Ludmilla's eye embraced nothing but one object, and the next moment she threw herself at her sovereign's feet.

The priest was about to retire, but Leopold would not permit him. "Stay, reverend father," he said,

in the kindest tone; "it is my wish to speak to you in private."

The monk inclined his head respectfully, and retired to a recess of the apartment, while the lord chamberlain withdrew.

"Are you the wife of Count Zriny?" inquired the emperor, in rather a harsh tone.

"I am, gracious sire," she replied, in so low a voice as scarcely to be heard.

"Rise, lady, I entreat, and compose yourself. Have you been ill?" he added, in a milder tone, observing her extreme paleness, and the almost convulsive trembling of her frame.

"No, sire; I am only an unhappy creature that has dared to appear before your majesty, to implore your compassion."

"I know what you mean; you wish to be allowed to rejoin your husband."

"It is—it is my only wish; that is my prayer to your majesty. Oh, deign to grant it!"

"Do you know, madam, where your husband now is—what it is you ask?"

"He is in the fortress of Kuffstein," bending down her head to conceal her tears.

"But do you know the reasons why he is confined there?"

For some moments she could not reply: then in a voice half stifled with sobs—"Oh, yes! it is for the crime of high treason—and he was his own accuser."

The emperor was now also silent; he recalled to mind the last scene between them. "But I mean, you are ignorant of his present condition?"

She sought to reply, but could only answer with

sobs and tears. Leopold was moved. Here was ample testimony to the noble qualities of his favourite, in the excessive love of his consort. He spoke some soothing words, and then beckoned father Isidor to approach. The emperor addressed him in Latin, and the priest replied in the same tongue; and after a brief colloquy, he again turned towards the countess.

"Your fate is, truly, a hard one; I will do what I can to relieve you; but I think, madam, you had better not persist in your idea of going to Kuffstein."

"Oh, my God! is my husband then no more? Is it therefore, sire, you —"

"He is still alive," interrupted Leopold; "and father Isidor will tell you more. I give you permission to go; but why add fresh bitterness to your lot? Adieu, countess; God alone can afford you relief—look up to Him." He held out his hand: the unhappy lady pressed it to her lips, her tears falling thick and fast, and the next instant she fainted in the arms of father Isidor.

In that state she was conveyed from the emperor's presence; and when she opened her eyes, she saw the faithful priest still near her. The ominous words, "Go not to Kuffstein," yet rung in her ears, and she fixed her eyes upon the holy father, as if to seek an explanation of what had passed.

"Calm yourself, dear lady," said the priest, in a tone of real commiseration; "you shall hear all when you have firmness enough to bear it. Only promise me that you will not attempt to go to Kuffstein."

"That is it! — those were the fatal words! —

Not go!—not share the captivity of my husband—of Zriny! You may kill me,—but no power on earth shall prevent me seeing him, while permitted to live."

"But there is something strangely mysterious, which I cannot divine."

"Oh, speak!—what is it?—I have courage, indeed I have, to hear all."

"When you feel yourself a little more restored, and more resigned."

"Delay not, if you pity me, as you seem—say that he is ill—is dead: however frightful it may be, I repeat, that I can bear it."

"Hear it then," said the priest, in a solemn tone, and receive, with Christian resignation, the chastisement of a just God. His blind, ungoverned passions have wrought his fall, not only of his house, his honour, and his freedom, but of the blessed gift of reason itself; that mind, once so proud and brilliant, is lost in clouds and darkness; for, did he not seduce from her sacred path the chosen spouse of Heaven?"

"Great God!" exclaimed the unhappy countess, hearing nothing of the last words, conscious alone of the additional calamity that had befallen her,—"this, indeed, I had not expected; it is too, too much to bear!" and she again sank back, overpowered by her feelings.

It was in vain the priest now attempted to control her; starting up, she tore her hair, and uttered the most piteous cries and lamentations; the attendants of the empress ran, terrified, into the apartments; and, committing the wretched Ludmilla to their care, father Isidor hastened to ascer-

tain the real situation of the no less unhappy count. The empress having been informed of Ludmilla's sufferings, instantly despatched her own physician and her most confidential attendants, to afford her all the relief in their power. But nothing could restrain her eagerness to see her husband; and the physician agreed that it was the only step which could allay the extreme excitation under which she laboured. The empress's carriage was immediately in attendance, and she was conveyed, by slow stages, from Wolfgang, through the town of Salzburg, and over the adjacent mountains, till, at length, they approached the solitary fortress. To reach it they were compelled to leave the carriage, and take a circuitous route on horseback, through the wild and dreary scenery which surrounded it on all sides. Supported by father Isidor and several female attendants, the countess appeared more calm and resigned as they drew near, listening, with greater attention than she had before shown, to the exhortations of the holy man. It was a sultry evening, towards the close of autumn, and a strange stillness filled the air, and rested upon the misty hills, as the twilight gradually thickened and stole over the surrounding landscape. They had already entered the narrow defile at the entrance of the gloomy fortress, proceeding, in mournful silence, till the priest, hearing a low muttering among the distant hills, stopped; and observing a dark speck of cloud in the horizon, foretold an approaching tempest, and ordered the party to hasten forward as quickly as possible.

Soon they entered the dark massy walls of the castle, which seemed to grow out of the solid rock,

and were capable alike of resisting all external attack, and preventing all possibility of escape. "This is Kuffstein," whispered the monk; and Ludmilla, as she raised her eyes to the terrific prison, uttered a deep sigh. They approached, and knocked loudly at one of the enormous iron doors, while the lonely sound of the *angelus* broke dismally upon the night. They were answered by a hoarse angry voice, that there was no admittance after night-fall; and the monk was compelled to conduct his feeble charge to a small dwelling in the vicinity, in a most pitiable state of mind.

The next morning, father Isidor was struck with the ravage which a single night's anxiety had produced in the looks of the wretched countess. At length, an order of admission from the governor roused her from a state of agonizing suspense. She was received by the governor, and he introduced the physician who attended upon the unhappy count. After preparing her for the interview, the latter accompanied her to the chamber of his patient, entreating her not to be surprised even if he refused to recognise her, as he had repeatedly asserted he knew no such personage as the countess Zriny. Ludmilla was greatly shocked, —the blood rushed into her face, and was succeeded by a deadly paleness.

"You will pardon me," said the doctor; "but both for your own and the count's sake, it is necessary to make these observations, and you must not attach any weight to the words of my unfortunate patient. He will tell you that he knows no lady who has the least right to bear his name;

but will be glad to see you if you are one Madame de Villecamp."

"Gracious God!" cried the wretched countess, "what language for a wife."

"It appears hard; but recollect that he attaches no meaning to what he says. As to myself, he mistook me for an emissary from the grand sultan, and will hold no communication with me, unless I humour the idea. He imagines himself also sovereign of Hungary, and a descendant of the celebrated Zapola,—the Tökely of a former age. He cannot be persuaded that he is imprisoned on the frontiers of the Tyrol; but thinks he occupies a royal palace in Hungary."

What were the feelings of the countess, as she passed by the gloomy cells, and along the galleries of the dreaded fortress; where she heard the clashing of chains, with the cries and revilings of the unhappy prisoners, which reverberated through the dismal caverns below. All around wore the aspect of desolation and horror; the horror and desolation of the wrecked mind and spirit of humanity—of noble and brilliant intellects for ever fallen,—the thousand fearful forms, and wild appalling sounds of blighted or ruined hopes! After ascending another staircase, they reached a part of the castle of more modern and less gloomy appearance, and the jailer hastened along the corridor, towards a massy folding-door, which he opened with an enormous key. They then found themselves in a spacious ante-chamber, where the attendants of the count received the physician's orders, and hastened to announce the intended visit

to their master. The reply brought was, "that his Hungarian majesty would be delighted to admit Madame de Villecamp into his presence; and the next moment the inner-door opened, and Ludmilla beheld her husband. He was dressed in a splendid Hungarian uniform; appeared little changed, and assumed all the airs of royalty as they advanced. His noble height, and fine figure, gave him immense advantage over the usual bearing of kings, and he aped "their pomp and state," in a style that would have excited the envy of most crowned heads. The mock solemnity and inanity of his countenance, made the picture complete; and an expression of foolish pleasure dwelt upon his features for a moment, as he held out his royal hand for Madame de Villecamp to kiss. On his introducing her, the physician observed, "that her ladyship happening to take a tour in these parts, casually heard that his majesty was then at his country-palace, and had come to pay her respects at his court." The count smiled; but it was a smile that pierced his wretched consort to the heart. He then paid her some fine compliments, and, turning towards the doctor with great dignity, he observed, in a most despotic tone: — "You must withdraw, sir; I want to hear nothing of the grand signor to-day." His majesty then politely walked him to the door, and shutting it after him, with all his might, hastened back to Ludmilla, and, pressing her tenderly to his bosom, declared how happy he was to see her. That moment repaid the wretched wife for much of the cruel sufferings and anxiety she had undergone on his account.

"Alas!" he said, looking affectionately in her face; "is it thus we meet again? — I had never dreamed it were possible. How fare you, my good Ludmilla?"

"Well, perfectly well, now I am with *you;* it seems so long — so very long since I saw you."

"Ah!" replied the count, "it could not be helped; and I tell you more — we must part again; for here," lowering his voice, "we must let no one suspect the real footing we are upon. The Polish princess is on her way to pay me a visit; — they say she is a beauty; but I shall not prize her by any means like my dear Ludmilla." He smiled as he said this, and then added, "But you look very pale — are you ill?"

"No, Zriny, I am not ill; — I am too happy to see you, and be near you, and hear you speak."

"Zriny, madam! what do you mean by that? inquired the count, sharply; "are you, too, infected with the popular error of the fools about me? Zriny! Count Zriny! they keep repeating; — yes, *Zriny* is upon eyery tongue. But it is all for the best; few can bear the truth! — it dazzles, it burns, it upsets them! Oh, it does a deal of harm!" In saying the last words, he passed his hand across his forehead, as if some painful recollection recurred to his mind.

"Does your head ache?" inquired Ludmilla; "you appear to me as if you were suffering."

A flush of anger instantly shot from his eyes. "Who dares to say that? — who shall contradict

me here? They are all in a plot together; they knock their foolish heads together as if they hoped to strike out a spark of sense; and whisper and look wise, and jabber like so many jack-daws upon a sheep's back; — and all to try how much wool they can pull out of one silly fleece. But then you know," in a confidential tone, "I, too, used to follow that old king in sheep's clothing, while the wolf was in my heart — that good old king, I mean, by whom I was loved so much, yet whom I served such a scurvy trick. The spectres that visit me, tell me all about it, every day of my life!" He went on muttering some inarticulate sounds, as if addressing himself to the wall; and, by his looks and gestures, appeared in earnest conversation with some imaginary objects; — a sight which so shocked his unhappy wife, that she retired to the grated window, wringing her hands in despair. Shortly afterwards he joined her. "You are admiring the prospect," he said, — "you never saw it before. I will show it you; — do you see that river? — it is the Waag; for we are now at Freucsin; only they blunder here so about the names. They call nothing by the right name; they want to impose upon me; and they first come with one face and then another. But I will punish them one of these days," he added, in a furious voice, "for having attempted even to impose upon a king."

"They must have offended you very greatly," observed Ludmilla, trying to humour his ideas, according to the advice of the physician.

"*You!* — *your majesty*, if you please, madam,

would sound more correct. But, as to offending me, I trample the venomous reptiles, like a mob, under my royal feet. But you shall hear,"—drawing her aside, — "all will soon be decided; — the Turkish army is in full march; the sultan Solyman is my sworn ally; my ancestors reigned before me in this kingdom; and I, too, will reign; — I, too, am a king! I will make the people tremble; the wretches! — do they dare to speak? — do they come? — do they laugh at me? — the base swinish multitude! — do they laugh at their own legitimate king?" With these words, he threw himself against the door with all his might.

"Oh, my dear love — my husband — I intreat you to be calm; there is no one with you but I — your Ludmilla — your wife — who lives only to love and to obey you!"

"No one here, eh? — what! are you too in the plot? Out of my sight — out of my royal presence instantly! They come — they rage and storm at me — and yet she pretends she can see nobody!" He then burst into an access of fury, as if engaged with a whole army of resolute enemies, bent upon seeking his life. He fought, defending himself inch by inch — attacking and retiring — till apparently driven into his last station, where, placing his back against the wall, he continued to maintain the unequal combat, till he fell utterly exhausted to the ground. The physician and attendants had hastened to the spot, on hearing the first symptoms of violence, and witnessed the last strange scene. Still they could not pre-

vail upon Ludmilla to leave her husband. He was placed upon a couch; and she supported his head during the whole time he continued insensible, as if life were wholly extinct. Gradually, however, he began to revive: he opened his eyes; his breathing grew more calm; and he at last looked round him. "What has happened to me, and where am I? Is it you, my dear, my excellent wife? But how weary I feel; — I must have been a long journey — and come from — from Vienna, no doubt. Yet I recollect nothing about it; — and where are we now?" He was perfectly composed, but seemed to have difficulty in arranging his ideas. He leaned his head upon his wife's bosom, again closed his eyes, and remained thus some time, as if he were sleeping. Her tears were flowing bitterly and abundantly; and at length her convulsive sobs seemed to rouse him from his lethargy. He looked at her, and saw that she was weeping. "You also weep! Yes, all who approach me shed tears; and it is I who cause them to flow. He, too, wept the very last time these eyes beheld him! and, when he pressed my hand in his, I felt one of those tears, which fell like fire upon my heart! But you! oh, do not weep thus, my Ludmilla! — do not, dearest, I beseech you! for I am better now. Nay, you must not," — and he wiped them, with a look of inexpressible tenderness, from her face; — "for, if his were hard to bear, yours, my love, will leave still deeper traces behind. Like his, they will burn — they will consume me here!" and he placed his hand upon his heart, and again fell into a

mournful silence; his head dropping again upon her bosom.

There was not a dry eye in the room; and the physician turned his head away, as he drew his chair nearer the unhappy lady, and breathed some words of consolation in her ear. What words of consolation, however, could be of any avail in a calamity like this? Disease, poverty, captivity,—all might be brought to a close, and if not, endured: but for hopeless insanity there remains nothing but death. In mercy to the reader, and to ourselves, we draw a curtain over the fate of individuals condemned to endure the bitterest evils to which human nature can be subjected: on one side, madness; and on the other, the misery of beholding it. Ludmilla forsook the world, in order to give herself up to her husband; and did not return to its enchantments, even after his death had dismissed her from the task of devoted love.

CHAPTER V.

Whilst the countess was thus engaged in her melancholy task at Kuffstein, her sister Catherine had her sufferings, scarcely less trying, within the walls of Vienna. Her beloved Szlatinski had long lingered painfully under the severe wounds he had received in the duel; and when, at length, sufficiently recovered, lost not a moment in rejoining the Polish army. The Ottoman hosts now completely beleaguered the city; their camp, extending in one immense circle, gradually drew closer to the walls, following the lines of approach; fresh trenches were daily opened, and new mines constructed. No sooner had day dawned, than the inhabitants were aroused by terrific discharges of cannon; the Turkish commanders had already established their quarters in the suburbs, and were thence making active preparations to storm the city. From this period, the roaring of the artillery was heard night and day, mingled with the continued explosions of the mines, and the wild shouts of the besiegers. Numbers of soldiers and citizens were daily swept from the ramparts, and

more met their fate in the frequent sorties, conducted under the eye of Count Stahremberg himself with rare intrepidity. Fires had burst forth in different quarters of the town, and were extinguished with great difficulty. The arsenal, with the entire magazines, had only been saved from destruction by the devoted courage of an artillery officer, who, by his presence of mind, became the saviour of his country.*

These conflagrations were caused, not only by the Turkish bombs, but by the hands of hired incendiaries; while other circumstances, no less suspicious, added to the terrors of such a siege. Signals were observed suddenly emerging from the summits of the roofs and towers, with the view, doubtless, of conveying secret intelligence to the enemy, and the strictest search led to no discovery. Famine next threw its gaunt and spectral shadow over the terror-stricken city, and excited to the uttermost the despair and fury of the people. Their suspicions fell upon the Hungarian malcontents, and their relatives and connections established at Vienna. Popular insurrections were the consequence, and the innocent, as well as the guilty, soon became the victims of their blind rage; and among others, an unhappy maniac, who, with a loud laugh, discharged a pistol at a pile of burning buildings, and was torn to pieces upon the spot. No one could venture into the streets in the Hungarian uniform; and the excitation of the public mind augured yet worse consequences, should not the expected succours arrive in time.

This frightful position of affairs, was a source of the deepest anxiety to the governor and the com-

manding officers, as well as to all those who, by their age or sex, were incapacitated from taking a share in the defence. Among these was the lovely bride of Szlatinski, whose gentle, yet heroic spirit, still sustained her amidst the dreadful scenes which surrounded her. She had received no tidings of her husband, since his return to Warsaw; and she was without hope of receiving any. All communication with the left side of the Danube, was now cut off; and it was too daring an act to venture through the Ottoman camp, for the boldest to attempt it. The governor was desirous of conveying a message to the commander-in-chief of the imperial forces, and offered a reward of a hundred ducats, to any one who would cross the river, and deliver it into the Duke of Lorraine's own hands. He was not even required to return, but simply to light a fire, as a signal, upon a fixed point, that he had fulfilled his mission. But no candidate for the perilous enterprise appeared.

There was one individual, indeed, and only one, who, had he been in these fearful scenes, would have hazarded the desperate exploit,—and that was the bold, and skilful Kolschutzki. But, alas! thought Catherine, "he is far away, with the adored object of all these tears and sighs,—this bitter and torturing suspense; and wherefore so long?—shall I ever again behold my heroic Sandor, and the faithful Kolschutzki?—Ah, why this fearful delay? why tarries the flower of warriors, at the head of the bravest army that ever Europe boasted, and which has alone quelled the pride and fury of the Ottoman? How would the sight of Sobieski, and his Poles, now cheer the drooping spirits of our

base and mutinous citizens! I fear me, the evil day will, ere that, arrive; and all will be lost."

Many days passed over in this agonizing state of suspense; the enemy pressed his attacks with redoubled vigour, and the garrison did its duty manfully. Count Roger, of Stahremberg, though still ill of a wound he had received, early in the siege, was present wherever danger threatened, or where vigorous efforts were most necessary to repulse, or keep the foe at bay. In the interior, the bishop of Collonitz superintended the cure of the wounded, the care of the sick, and the relief of the indigent, in particular the families of those who had perished in their country's cause. His eloquence, and his repeated solicitations brought immense resources to the different charities, while his zeal and example induced all ranks to promote his pious labours to the utmost. He exhorted the ladies of highest birth, to prepare linen and bandages, to administer medicines, and to provide nourishing food. They even attended the sick in the public hospitals, while those of a lower class assisted in the labours of the men, in working at the countermines, carrying earth and water; in short, in all manual exertions, not absolutely beyond their power. The noble and devoted spirit thus displayed by the higher classes, as well as by the weaker sex, wrought, at length, a good effect upon the great body of the citizens. The public mind grew more calm and confident; the sufferings of all orders became proportionally diminished, and every one that had the power, hastened to contribute something towards the general alleviation of the privations and burdens to be endured. Catherine Szlatinski, and her friend,

Madame de Preysing, were indefatigable in promoting these laudable objects; and in such charitable occupations, the former found momentary relief from the distracting thoughts by which she was assailed.

One morning, after a terrific assault, during which the incessant play of artillery, and throwing of bombs, had driven the inhabitants of the town into the deepest and most secluded recesses at their command, an unusual number of wounded were borne from the ramparts. The religious, and other societies, instantly hastened to give all the assistance in their power, in the hospitals founded for the purpose, and superintended by the excellent bishop of Collonitz. Among other ladies, Catherine had been offering up her prayers at the church of St. Stephen, and was now hastening to fulfil her pious charge of tending the sick. On her way, she met a party conveying some wounded men to the convent of the Cordeliers; and she could perceive the countenances of many of them, as they were carried close past the spot where she stood. The first she saw, was a young student, whose right arm had been shattered by a ball. He was deadly pale, except where he was covered with his blood; his eyes were closed, and he appeared to suffer extreme pain. She thought she traced some resemblance in his features to those of Szlatinski; she uttered a cry of horror, and was only prevented from falling by an aged woman, who supported, and with some difficulty, assisted her to reach home. Upon first beholding her, Madame de Preysing imagined that she had been wounded, such was the painful impression she had received, and which continued during the remainder of the day.

In the evening, the good bishop, as was his habit, called to see Madame de Preysing, and, in the hope of learning something respecting the poor student, Catherine hastened into his presence. She was not mistaken; the dreadful bombardment of that morning was the sad theme of every tongue; he described the fearful havock it had made; the increased number of killed and wounded, and the inadequate means for the accommodation and support of the sufferers. The chief part of the most distinguished, had either been killed or disabled; the provisions, and even the ammunition, began to fail, while the fires daily became more frequent. The governor, he added, in order to avoid the confusion arising out of a variety of signals, had issued orders, that in case of sudden emergency, no bells, except those belonging to the cathedral, were to be rung; when the whole of the male population were to assemble at a given point, and the whole of the females to seek refuge at the fountains; and such as were able, to assist in extinguishing the fires. The hospitals were thronged with the dying, not merely from wounds, but from sickness and excessive fatigue; and the public cemeteries were scarcely spacious enough to receive the dead. Desperation and despair seemed to pervade the extremes of society, in the higher and lower ranks; but fortunately, the spirit of the garrison remained unimpaired, and the middle orders of the citizens met the growing dangers with increasing courage and resolution. Even the wives of this most virtuous and industrious portion of the community, vied

with each other in rendering their best services, to the cause of religion and their country.

"It does me good to hear it," replied Madame de Preysing; "it is thus women vindicate their character, and merit the name of citizenesses, by contributing to the general good. Need I instance the *Sœurs Grisés?* They do not restrict their humane cares, either to age or sex."

Catherine, who had never before heard of this noble sisterhood, inquired its character and occupations. Her friend informed her of its institution by the virtuous St. Vincent, of Paule; the members of which, inspired by the example of their founder, consecrated their lives to the service of the unfortunate, no less in their private capacity, than in fixed establishments wholly devoted to this holy object. She gave a number of examples, from those of France and other countries, of their generous efforts and devotion, beyond all praise; adding, that several monarchs had expressed a wish to behold so beneficent an institution extended to their own states.

So truly noble and useful did a life thus spent appear in the eyes of Catherine Szlatinski, that, without the hope of rejoining her beloved Sandor, she would have devoted herself to it with joy. She pursued the subject with the warmest interest, and ceased not to inquire into further particulars, as to its progress and results. The next morning she informed her mother, that, till the return of her lord and husband, she was resolved to enter the society of sisters who were thus employed, at the different charitable institutions conducted by

the amiable bishop of Collonitz. Many of the wretched objects of their care had fallen victims to the flames, dug out of the ruins of houses, or had been maimed by the bursting of the shells.

Upon learning her intentions, the poor old lady was half distracted; she looked upon Catherine with the utmost astonishment, and said the bare idea of such a step almost made her faint. "What! the daughter of the Baroness Volkersdorf become an avowed nurse of common people—the wives of the lowest artizans! surely the most dreadful revolution must be near at hand; for what could the great Turk himself do worse, than make slaves and servants of them all? But I suppose, Catherine, you wish to prepare yourself for so terrible a fate, and learn to submit, without a murmur, to what cannot be helped. If that be the case, my dear, I cannot, indeed, refuse you my permission; nay, if we are to be carried into slavery, I too had better begin,—change dresses with our servants, and let them fill our places. Yes, I see the revolution is come, and all order will be reversed!"

In this strange and distracted way, did the wretched lady run on, and ended by assuring her daughter, that her husband Szlatinski — for Catherine had revealed her secret marriage — must have been long dead, and that she might now safely enough enter a nunnery;— much more respectable than becoming "a servant of all work," for one of her rank and accomplishments,— to say nothing of the family honour, which would be tarnished for ever. It was in vain Catherine sought to explain her motives, she could only sigh and lament,—for it was impossible, in any manner, to

reconcile her mother to surrounding circumstances, or what the poor baroness emphatically termed "the revolutionary state of things."

Meanwhile, the situation of the capital became each day more desperate. The autumn had set in; the imperial army lay inactive upon the left banks of the Danube, though it daily received some accession of strength from the neighbouring principalities. Sobieski and his army had not yet arrived, and it was deemed unadvisable to hazard any attempt, even for the relief of the city, till they had formed a junction with the Poles,— the only soldiers whom, from fatal experience, the Mussulman had been taught to dread. The grand vizier, irritated at the protracted resistance he had encountered, and the losses sustained by continual sorties upon the side of the besieged, and being well informed as to the actual situation of the capital, came to the resolution of concentrating his entire forces, and making one vigorous effort to carry the place by a simultaneous assault. He felt that this must be achieved, if ever, before the approach of the Polish monarch, whom he justly dreaded, as the most consummate warrior of his age. With this view, he pressed his operations with extreme rapidity, despatched fresh troops to the assault, and carried his mines under the very walls.

The slaughter and the fury of the war, at this time, were terrific to hear and to behold; but in Count Stahremberg, the Turks met with an enemy equally active and resolute in counteracting and repulsing their desperate attacks. But, to add to their other horrors, a contagious disease burst out

in the garrison, and its brave commander himself did not escape. Still his courage and activity were unsubdued; he was borne to every station where danger threatened, and encouraged the soldiers and citizens to fill up the vacancies of the dying and the dead, both by his example and his words. He had caused an observatory to be erected upon the summit of St. Stephen's, and was carried thither to reconnoitre the positions of the enemy, the moment he left the walls. There, seated on a wooden bench, which is still preserved, and shown to strangers who visit the little tower, he formed his plans for counteracting the works of the enemy — attacking them in his sorties, and obtaining relief from the imperialists, whose position he could accurately ascertain from the same spot.

The month of August had elapsed; the siege had continued during six weeks, and there appeared little prospect of its being raised. The fury of the Turks was redoubled by the unexpected resistance they had encountered from so inferior a force. The Asiatic troops were accustomed, at this period of the year, to disband; and the vizier had no time to lose in bringing the campaign to a close. Two of the principal ramparts had been dreadfully battered; and Count Stahremberg now caused chains to be drawn across the streets, and the gates barricaded as well as the private houses; — all which convinced the inhabitants that the crisis was at hand. In vain they looked for relief; in vain excited the imperial army to attack the enemy before the arrival of the Poles. They had learnt from some spies, who had contrived to

penetrate through the Ottoman camp, that the contingents from Bavaria, Franconia, and Saxony, had already joined the imperial standard; but there were no tidings of Sobieski. The Turks, also, having interrupted one of these emissaries, were upon the alert; and all further communication with the Austrian army ceased. Each night, however, the governor ordered signal guns to be fired from the summit of St. Stephen's, to inform the commander-in-chief of their distress; and each night he looked with increased anxiety for the appearance of fires upon the heights of Mount Kahlenberg, as had been agreed, to announce an attack of the imperialists upon the enemy's camp. Yet no fire, except that of the enemy, and the conflagrations of the capital, were to be seen. All anticipated the final storming of the Ottomans, and the terrific slaughter and excesses which would inevitably ensue from the excited spirit of the infidels—exasperated, as it had been, by a resistance so heroically prolonged.

At this trying juncture, the governor offered an immense reward, as he had before done, for the conveyance of a message to the commander-in-chief,—announcing the desperate condition of the capital, and that it was impossible it could hold out beyond a very few days. No one appeared; for the dreadful tortures inflicted by the enemy, upon the Christian emissaries who had been taken, deterred the bravest and most patriotic from venturing on such a perilous attempt. Of this fact, Catherine Szlatinski had just been informed by the good Bishop of Collonitz, whose warm esteem and friendship she had won by her admirable spirit

and exertions in the humane cause to which he was so assiduously devoted. They were lamenting the speedy approach of the final struggle for religion and independence in the very streets of the capital ; and Catherine was expressing her deep regret at the absence of her consort and the faithful Kolschutzki at such a crisis ; — either of whom, she doubted not, would have risked their lives for the salvation of the capital.

"Ah! would to Heaven," exclaimed the lovely and heroic being, "that I were but a man ; for believe me, good father, I have the courage, if you could obtain me but permission, to attempt it. Could I not, in the Turkish costume, find my way through the enemy's camp, and reach the Duke of Lorraine? Indeed, indeed, I will risk my life to tell him of the dreadful sufferings and despair of this unhappy city, and its fast-perishing children !"

The bishop was struck with astonishment and admiration as he heard these words, and beheld the fine expression and attitude of the beautiful and devoted spirit; for such she seemed, as her eye and voice gave an almost angelic inspiration to her whole appearance. But before he could reply, one of the nurses at the Ursuline convent, converted to the purpose of a hospital, hastily entered, and informed the bishop that a Turkish spy had just been arrested, as he was applying for admittance into the hospital, under the plea of visiting a Greek lady, who lay grievously wounded there. Upon being secured, he had earnestly intreated to be permitted to see a young person named Catherine Szlatinski, if yet living, as he had some important communications to make to her, which regarded both herself, and

the safety of the capital, Catherine started, but instantly acceded to the man's request, although the bishop attempted to dissuade her. He begged, however, to be present at the interview, and commanded the person to be brought into the lady's presence. It was done; and the unfortunate spy, breaking from his guards by a sudden effort, threw himself at her feet, and throwing off his Turkish dress, presented the form and features of the faithful Kolschutzki. The lady uttered a cry of surprise and joy, as she seized and pressed to her lips and bosom the letters which he extended towards her.

"Joy, joy!" he exclaimed; "my dear master, and the great warrior, are hastening by forced marches to your relief, and, ere a week elapse, will give battle to the enemy that beleaguer your walls."

"Yes," continued Catherine; "but will they be in time to save the capital from destruction?"

"Ere a week pass over our heads," replied the bishop, "Vienna will be a heap of ruins, and her inhabitants the prey of rapine and the sword; if the imperial army raise not the seige within three days, we are a lost people." Catherine made no reply; amidst tears, and smiles, and tremblings, she had been absorbed in the perusal of her beloved consort's letters; and was now engaged in a low and breathless dialogue with the Greek, without appearing sensible that a single person, besides they two, were present. Collonitz gazed at her with an expression of deep interest and surprise; and then, with a sigh, turned away, in the idea that her whole thoughts and affections were running in another current; no longer occupied with the calamities which threatened the state.

He was about to retire, when Kolschutzki, advancing, addressed himself to the noble prelate: "Let me attend you, my lord; I am ready to receive the governor's orders. I have heard all from my excellent lady,—and will venture my life for my adopted country."

"You wish it! you will do it!" exclaimed Catherine, in a tone of heroic enthusiasm; "yes," turning towards the bishop, "I was not mistaken; Kolschutzki offers to become the benefactor,—the saviour of the capital,---of us all! yet, alas! if he should fall a victim to his heroism!" and she burst into a flood of tears.

The good prelate was deeply affected; he seized the hand of the brave Greek, and thanked him in the name of his unhappy country; while, addressing himself to his excellent lady, Kolschutzki besought her not to afflict herself, as it gave him far greater pain, than the idea of the undertaking before him. "We all require to preserve our fortitude," observed he, "and I give you my sacred word that I will do all in my power, to prove myself worthy of the confidence you have placed in me;" and he held out his hand, as a pledge of what he said, which his grateful mistress pressed to her bosom, and covered with her tears. "Adieu!" he cried; "if I return not, say every thing—you know all—to my dear master,—that it was for you and him, I ——;" but the last words were lost, as he hurried the good prelate away, to present him to Count Stahremberg.

Agitated by conflicting emotions of alternate hope and dread, Catherine Szlatinski, after having disburthened her overcharged heart in prayer to

the throne of all mercies, returned to her pious duties with greater fortitude and resignation, than she had felt for some weeks past.

Meantime, the bold Greek was receiving the governor's despatches for the Duke of Lorraine, acquainting him with the fearful crisis of affairs; and that within a very few days, without some decisive action, the imperial city and its inhabitants, must fall under the overwhelming assaults, and merciless swords of the Mussulmans. The bold Greek* set out on his perilous mission the same evening. It was a dark and stormy night, not unfavourable for such an expedition; the rain fell in torrents, and thunder and lightning mingled with the incessant roar of the artillery. He had resumed his Turkish disguise, in which he had already traversed the enemy's camp, and issued forth through the gate called the Schottenthor. Ere the ensuing morning, he expected to be clear of the enemy's camp; but the massy clouds, which gathered thicker and blacker, as the night advanced, sent forth such tremendous peals, mingled with hail and storm, as compelled him to seek refuge in the ruins of an adjacent building, destroyed by fire. There he waited the first streak of dawn, which showed him the innumerable tents of the foe, stretching into the distance, far as the eye could embrace them. He dashed through the intervening space into the lines, and through the thickest of the camp, humming an old Turkish ballad, with the most bold and careless air; but as chance

* The exploit of Kolschutzki, as well as the details relative to the siege, are wholly historical. At the period, appeared an account, with a portrait of this brave man, who was also honourably mentioned in the bulletins.

would have it, he got involved in a labyrinth of windings and turnings, amidst the suburbs, and after pursuing his way for a considerable time, arrived exactly at the place from which he had set out. Though vexed, he did not abate a jot of courage; resumed his way, and even accepted the invitation of an aga, who, seeing a fellow-countryman drenched to the skin, asked him into his tent to take breakfast. There he contrived to learn the precise direction he ought to take, without exciting any suspicion, holding out that he was employed by higher Turkish authorities, and must reach the banks of the river on matters of business. Having heard much more intelligence, of an important nature, from the kindness of his host, than he had expected, he thanked him for his hospitable reception, and soon found himself happily beyond the limits of the Ottoman camp. He then took a circuitous route through the mountains, and arrived at the banks of the river between Kloster-Neuburg and Nussdorf. The sun had now risen, and poured a flood of light upon the rich landscape, and the broad stream of the majestic river, which seemed to sparkle with innumerable golden rays. Behind him lay the troubled city, so fearfully menaced with destruction, with the glittering tents of the infidels, so ferociously intent upon its spoils. How strangely contrasted with the prospect that lay before him! all nature seemed bathed in fresh and dewy light; peace spread her wings over the gentle dawn, — and reviving nature once more spread abroad the influence of her quiet charms, and those eternal laws of animated life and order,

obeyed by all but the pride, and hatred, and cruelty of man.

From afar, the sound of the enemy's artillery rolled heavily upon the ear, answered by the feebler fire of the capital, most painfully blended with the matin song of a thousand warblers from the neighbouring woods and thickets, with which the islands of the Danube so much abound. The rain had given a deeper glow to the verdure of the meads and hills, enveloped in a soft grey mist which the radiant sun was gradually dispersing from the humid earth.

Upon the opposite side, he observed those pretty hamlets which the scourge of war had yet spared; and could discern the peasants pursuing their quiet labours of the field. To one fresh from all the horrors of war, and its scenes of havoc and desolation, such a sight was strangely affecting; and for some moments even the eye of the veteran Kolschutzki dwelt upon it with a feeling of unfeigned pleasure.

Kloster-Neuburg, indeed, had sustained a siege; but with rare valour had repulsed a division of the Ottomans, under the direction of a lay-brother — Marcellus Orkner, who, when all his brother monks took to flight, alone remained to head the citizens, — conquered, — and handed down his name with applause, to posterity.

As he proceeded, Kolschutzki perceived a group of Christian women in an islet not far from him, under the shade of some ash and willow trees, engaged in washing linen, and so intently, that they did not see his approach. He called to them, — all raised their eyes in a moment, and observing his

Turkish habit, were seized with such a panic, that they ran calling out for help into an adjoining thicket. Shortly there issued forth a number of armed men, several of whom fired; so that, after escaping the Turks, he saw himself upon the point of losing his life by the hands of Christians. He threw himself flat on his face, tore off his turban, and cried aloud in good German, that he too was a Christian. He then sprung up, and in an authoritative tone, bade them ground their muskets, and conduct him instantly to the tent of the Austrian general. Upon this, an aged veteran advanced towards him, and doffing his military cap, inquired, "What might be the stranger's business?"

"He wants a boat," replied Kolschutski, "and that full speedily; here is my passport from the governor, and let me see your officer."

The old soldier withdrew, and as quickly returned, accompanied by a young man of noble mein, whose military cloak and police hat, showed that he was one in authority.

"You bear tidings from the city?" addressing himself to Kolschutzki; "follow me some hundred yards down the banks, and we shall find a fishing-boat, in which you must cross the river."

In a few minutes the active Greek had traversed an arm of the Danube, and again presented himself before the officer on the next station. He was received with evident marks of suspicion; but disdaining to answer the sharp interrogatories put to him, he took the last officer's passport from the folds of his turban, and handing it with a smile, observed, that he was happy to see what a deadly

abhorrence people every where had to the sight of a turban.

"So, you are called Kolschutzki?" said the officer in authority; "and you have a house in the Leopoldstadt?"

"I once had, sir; but it shared the fate of the entire suburb."

"Have you many connections in the capital?"

"A good many; I have been settled in Vienna during several years."

"Did you happen to know any thing of the lord chamberlain, Zriny?"

"Alas, too well; — too well!" answered Kolschutzki, with a deep sigh; "but time presses — why ask? let me on to the general!"

Another boat was speedily in readiness, and the last officer on the station, accompanied him into the tent of the Duke of Lorraine. Here, after delivering his letter, concealed in the inmost folds of his turban, he waited till the general-in-chief had perused it; and then himself described the deplorable state in which he had left the capital. The duke listened to him with deep emotion, yet warmly defended the course he had hitherto pursued, as he would show, in his reply to the governor, having delayed a general attack only till he had obtained sufficient reinforcements. They had now arrived, and he was preparing for a decisive action, having already twice given battle to Tökely; and retaken Presburg. The moment that the Polish monarch arrived was to be the signal for marching to the assistance of the capital, by compelling the Ottomans to give battle under its walls.

"In a few days," he added, "I trust the siege

will be raised; but we must not lose a moment;" and commanding his attendants to treat the brave Greek with every mark of distinction, he retired to prepare a written answer.

Kolschutzki, meantime, was exploring the quarters of the general-in-chief, which were situated between Angern and Stillfried, and exactly upon the spot where, ages before, had been fought the desperate battles between the Emperor Rodolph of Hapsbourg and King Ottocar of Bohemia. On his return, the daring emissary was accompanied by General Housfiler, on the swiftest horses in the camp, until he again reached the banks of the river. Here he recommenced his perilous undertaking, in which we shall not follow him, but return to the distressed capital, where his arrival, or tidings of his fate, were looked for with extreme anxiety and impatience. It is impossible to depict the increased sufferings of the inhabitants; their almost supernatural exertions to protract the terrific day of its fall; and the yet more intense agony, the suspense, and just apprehensions,—all which he was compelled to conceal,—which filled the breast of Count Stahremberg. He knew, too well, from the obstinate valour already displayed by the garrison, that no quarter would be given by the enemy; that every street of the capital must flow with Christian blood, and neither age nor sex obtain exemption from the point of the sword. Nay, if possible, worse horrors were in store for them than death itself,—indignities too appalling to contemplate; of which rapine, violation, and bondage, were not the least. So small was now the broken force opposed to the hordes of Ottomans, that

every soldier or citizen who fell, still decreased the chances of prolonged defence, by ten, or even a hundred fold. In the momentary intervals of his severe duties, his eye was ever turned towards the extensive plains on the left banks, from which signs of approaching succour would first be discerned. As he thus gazed, he uttered inwardly a secret prayer, that, if doomed to utter destruction, he might perish by the sword, ere he witnessed the horrors of his country's downfall.

Two days more, and no reply to their repeated signals of distress. On the morning of the third, the guard of the Schottenthor gate, heard the signal agreed upon to mark the return of the faithful Kolschutzki. He had again escaped the perils of a passage through the enemy's camp. He delivered his despatches, and gave an encouraging account of the state of the imperial army.

"Are they in march?—will they fight?—will they raise the siege?" inquired the count, with a look of mingled rage and contempt, as he trampled the letter he had just perused under his feet; "when will they give battle?"

"The moment when Sobieski and his Poles arrive!" was the reply.

"Is it possible? do they know we perish, and that our country dies with us? What! dare they not fight except under the wings of the Poles, or do they dread the eye of Sobieski more than that of the enemy, that they can march only in his presence? But let us do *our* duty, and the will of God be done!"

The noble governor then thanked Kolschutzki in

the presence of the whole staff, and tendered him the large sum agreed upon as the reward.

"Place it, brave, and excellent sir," exclaimed the Greek, "in the public fund, for instant use; it is idle to talk of property at a moment like this. Let us hasten to man the walls."

A shout of admiration, at these words, burst from the whole of the officers; and, as if inspired by the heroic example, the sound was caught up by the people, and all hastened with renewed vigour to meet the onset of their bitter foe. During that, and the ensuing day, the conflict was maintained with the desperation of a closing death-struggle on the side of the besieged, and with all the fury of national hate and exasperation on that of the Mussulman; the thunder of the battle, and the storming, rolled with unmitigated wrath, day and night. Along the whole extent of the Turkish lines, myriads of fresh troops rushed into the trenches, and made desperate efforts to gain the walls; they scaled the ramparts, and here and there, turbaned heads appeared for a moment, and were as fast hurled from the walls. Despair gave courage to the feeblest; every man was at his post, and soldier and citizen fought side by side. Still, as the tide of battle threatened to overwhelm the walls, it was hurled back with as wild a fury; shouts rent the air, and one red, sulphureous canopy enveloped the dread scene over which it rose, and shrouded the face of the sky. Towards noon of the second day, however, the unremitted fire of the enemy began to slacken; there was a pause in the rush of the storming parties to the walls, and both sides, as if

exhausted by the fiercely maintained struggle, rested upon their arms. Had it continued only a few hours longer, the capital must have fallen, and it was but too evident that, should it be renewed, there was no longer a hope of preserving it another day against such fearful odds.

But the dawn of Austrian's salvation,—of the imperial city, if not of Christian Europe itself, at length appeared. The heroes of Poland, with their warrior-king, the scourge of the Ottomans, at their head, were seen in full march along the plains; its martial van, bearing down directly upon the seat of war. The Duke of Lorraine broke up his camp to join them, and directed his route upon Stokerens. The Turks, aware of his intention, attacked him with the utmost fury; but, animated by the approach of the Poles, he succeeded in repulsing them, and continued his march till he formed a junction with Sobieski at Hollebrum. He was favourably received by the great monarch, and when he wished to conduct himself with the usual forms, as he had done with the Emperor Leopold, who exacted all the ceremonies observed towards crowned heads, Sobieski cut him short, and said,

"I left the king behind me at Warsaw; speak to me as a friend and brother in arms. He then presented to the duke his son, James Sobieski, just entering upon his first campaign, and requested that he would be good enough to teach him the great art of war. He next summoned the dukes of Bavaria and of Saxony, each of whom was at the head of his own troops, to assist him forthwith in holding a council of war. The king himself pre-

sided; and it was deliberated whether it would be practicable to pass the Danube at Tullen, and thence take the shortest and most difficult route, over the heavy mountains of Kahlenberg; or proceed by a longer and easier, but more circuitous path by passing through the city of Presburg. Several officers supported the latter plan, on the ground that supposing Kara Mustapha to be acquainted with their movements, he would obstinately dispute the passage of the river, and occupy the most favourable positions in the broken and abrupt roads through which they must pass, from which it might be next to impossible to dislodge him. But Sobieski knew the enemy with whom he had to deal; his strange infatuation, and his determined blindness. With his sure and rapid glance, he penetrated the whole circumstances by which he was surrounded, and it was decided, with the full approbation of the electors, who deferred to his judgment and experience, that the passage should be made at Tullen. Not a moment was lost; pontoons and the artificers were transported thither in carriages, while the army followed by forced marches, in order to reach the river before the enemy could collect any formidable force on that point to resist their passage. From thence the Austrians would be enabled to join, with like promptitude, from which they could simultaneously descend to the rescue of the city.*

Sandor Szlatinski, perfectly recovered from his

* As regards the march of the armies, the battle, and the raising of the siege, the whole is historical, and the reader might even follow the details upon the map of this part of Austria.

wounds, accompanied the warlike monarch, whose friendship and confidence he fully merited, and by whom he had been placed high in command. He led the van; there was no longer hesitation or delay; — all was prompt, rapid, and masterly execution. The environs of Prague, and the adjacent country were covered with Christian troops, and so swift, yet orderly was their march, that their approach had not been announced at Vienna; which was preparing for its last, desperate resistance, with resources so enfeebled, as to preclude almost the possibility of success. The enemy having had breathing time, once more prepared for a general assault, directing their whole force against the Scloten and Burg gates, to protect which the imperialists had thrown up intrenchments at every ten yards, bristling with artillery, and defended by the remains of the garrison, the citizens, students, and strangers, who all devoted themselves to this service. There not being sufficient wood to form the palisades, the proprietors of several large mansions, insisted that the wood-work of their roofs should be applied to that purpose. Besides the beams, the iron bars were every where removed from the entrances and the windows, for the completion of the same work. Scarcely had this been done when the Turks were observed to be in motion, while the watch, now constantly on duty, announced that their vast columns were forming and setting out in different directions. The agas and chief officers were seen flying hither and thither, while their camp at Leopoldstadt was directing its march on the Weinenberg, and numerous detachments marched in haste towards the same position.

Still the enemy ceased not his fire upon the city, — sprung the whole of his mines, and supported a heavy cannonade against the bastions of Leuvel and la Burg. They had battered the whole fortifications on this side, and it was evident that the fall of the city was nigh at hand.

Suddenly, two hours after mid-day, on the 11th of September, the sound of cannon was heard near the chapel of Leopoldsberg. The Turks, in order of battle, returned it with a terrific fire. Next appeared groups of Christian soldiers, upon the heights beyond; the enemy's assaults on the city were redoubled, and ceased not with the darkness of the night. Kara Mustapha, still sat watching the result, plunged in deep and sad reflections: opposite him rose the walls, which, though dreadfully injured by his terrific cannonades, he had not yet been enabled to surmount; he saw the palace of the emperors riddled by his balls, yet standing firm as the throne, which they had for ages encompassed. The numerous spires of the temples devoted to the true faith still pierced the sky, around the majestic dome of St. Stephen's. With what false hopes, then, had the haughty vizier sat down before those walls, with a host of two hundred thousand men; led away by the dreams of his astrologers, and the fair promises of Tökely and Zriny, no less than by his own overweening presumption and ambition. Little had he calculated on the resistance he had met with, predicting as he had done, not only the fall of the Austrian monarchy, but that of the power of Rome, and even of Christianity itself, as the consequence of his known military talents, and previous good

fortune. The imperial city, over whose ruins he was to reach the Vatican, defied him to the last; his army was discouraged, and the Janissaries, who had restricted their services to a period of two-and-forty days, began to murmur, loudly demanding their discharge; while a vast portion lay yet unburied upon the plain. The vizier had required a few days' truce to inter them, but the governor, apprehensive of treachery, had refused his consent, invariably interrupting the attempt on the part of the Turks, by repeated and vigorous sorties. His efforts, likewise, to prevent the junction of the Polish and Austrian armies had failed, attended with considerable loss. An attack would now, he foresaw, be made to rescue the capital, and he might behold the fruits of his grand expedition snatched in a moment from his grasp.

"Never, never!" he exclaimed in bitter rage: "I must make myself master of the city; — the key to all my ulterior projects." Thus excited and maddened by disappointment, he persevered in bombarding the place, regardless of the approach of the liberating armies, opposing to them only a portion of his immense forces, in the blind belief that the Christians were predestined to behold the storming of the capital, without the means of prevention. He was, in short, seized with that infatuation which, in haughty minds, inspires a confidence of triumph, when standing upon the very brink of destruction.

Measures of precaution, however, were not wholly neglected by the Ottomans; watches were set, and fires lighted on all sides, while the increased activity and marshalling of the battalions, announced

the expected attack of the Christians. The curtains of the grand vizier's tent were drawn aside, and he beheld by the night-fires, the terrific progress of devastation, from his continued bombarding, against the half-ruined walls of the city. He observed with savage joy, a fierce light issue from the tower of St. Stephen's; it was the unhappy citizens, making their last signals of distress. But his exultation was short,—a sudden blaze rose from a mountain to the north-west; and he hastily rose to inquire into the cause. At the same instant, several slaves arrived out of breath, bearing tidings that discharges of musketry were heard from Mount Kahlenberg; the truth of which was confirmed by two cannon shot, replied to by three others from the ramparts of Vienna. It was the signal for an attack upon the Turks. Kara Mustapha was mad with rage; he tore off his turban, stamped and ground his teeth, like a desperate man. It was some time, before he could give directions to his different pachas, his agas, and other officers, all hastening at once to receive his orders at so critical a juncture. "I have none to give you!" he exclaimed in haughty and bitter tone, "besides what you have had these eight weeks, — to storm and exterminate yonder city, under the eyes of the Austrian army." In vain the pachas of Buda and Scutari, represented the fruitlessness of such an attempt, at such a moment; but he persisted, and angrily dismissed them from his presence.

It is impossible to describe the joy of the Viennese upon receiving assurance that their deliverers were at hand. Only those who have endured the horrors of a nine weeks' siege, can form an ade-

quate idea of the rapture with which a knowledge of approaching succour is first hailed. The joyous tidings spread with incredible rapidity; people of every age, men, women, and children, ran shouting into the streets; covered the roofs of the houses, the towers, and churches, whence they could perceive the fires of the Christian troops upon the surrounding heights, extending from Mount Leopold beyond those of Dornback. All who met, however strange to each other, embraced like the warmest friends; the sick were no longer sensible of their pains; the afflicted forgot their woes, and enemies their hatred, in the universal joy. The remnant of the army, soldiers, volunteers, and citizens, flew to the ramparts, eager to make a sortie, and it was with difficulty Count Stahremberg succeeded in restraining their impetuosity. He knew the siege was not yet over.

CHAPTER VI.

At dawn of the succeeding day, the thunder of the enemy's artillery bore witness that Kara Mustapha was still faithful to his designs of carrying the capital by assault. But the day which must have crowned the projects of the Musselman, was also the signal for the Christian army to commence the great work of deliverance under the auspices of the Polish hero. It was the Sabbath,—the day consecrated to God; solemn prayers were offered up, and all was prepared to give battle under the banners of the cross. With the first streaks of morn that broke on the Hungarian plains, and tinged the waters of the Danube, the Polish monarch quitted his tent, where he had spent the night in maturing his plans; the Duke of Lorraine, with his staff, arrived soon after, and a council was held in the half-ruined convent of the Camaldoli. There was little in the appearance of Sobieski that announced the hero; his figure was short and thick set; but the fire which sparkled in his eye, the noble expression of his features, and the quickness of his motions, all combined to convey an impression of his

genius. He wore the national dress,—long and flowing, belted round the waist, from which hung a short sabre with a gold hilt, the sleeves of his cloak were open, and thrown back over his shoulders; he wore his hair short, with the Polish military cap. He was accompanied by a numerous and brilliant staff, consisting of all the great deputaries of his kingdom.

The commanders and superior officers formed a sort of half-circle as they stood before the king. He saluted them with noble frankness and affability, and then in brief and forcible terms, he reminded them of the importance of the cause for which they were that day about to combat,—the cause, not only of their sovereign, their country, and their honour; but of the glory of God, and the safety of Christian Europe. He next set out, followed by all present, to the chapel of Leopoldsberg, where the venerable father, Marcus Abianus, a capuchin, distinguished for his piety, attended to perform mass. After the ceremony, the holy man administered the sacrament; and the king, calling to him his son, bade him kneel before the altar, where he conferred on him the honour of knighthood, and armed him with his own hands.

Sustained and excited by religious sentiments, and with the example of the great monarch, each betook himself to his respective post, and haranguing the soldiers, sought to impress them with the same pious courage and enthusiasm which they had imbibed at the foot of the altar. The troops were impatient to be led against the Ottomans: at their feet lay the Austrian capital, almost obscured from view by the morning mists, and the thick clouds of

smoke from the enemy's artillery, while a light breeze from the east brought the sound of the last assault of the Ottomans, — the springing of the mines, and the rolling of the heavy mortars,—more loudly upon the ear. All convinced Sobieski that not a moment was to be lost.

The left wing, commanded by the Duke of Lorraine, consisted of Austrian and Saxon troops; the Prince of Waldeck led the centre, assisted by the Duke of Bavaria; while Sobieski,—the soul of these immense limbs of war,—took his station on the right wing,—the flower of the Poles, — which extended along the heights, as far as Dornback. Five discharges of cannon was the signal for the attack, and the allied columns began to move into the plains. At this signal, the pachas rode full gallop to the grand vizier's tent, to receive his orders for the action, which it was evident could no longer be avoided. But Kara Mustapha, like one whom the fates had driven into madness, as a prelude to his destruction,* pointed only to the capital, crying out: "Vienna! Vienna! on, on;—more bombs and mortars,—storm!—bullets!—scaling ladders!—fire the four quarters of the town!" The Khan of Tartary now insisted, that the whole of the besieging troops should make head against the new enemy, whose rapidity and formidable force called for decisive action. The grand vizier foamed with rage, rolled upon the ground, and tore his beard and hair in an access of fury and despair. The Pacha of Diaberskir was the only man capable of reducing him to reason, and he compelled him to place himself at

* Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.

the head of his army. The standard of the prophet was unfurled; the vizier gave the command of the right wing before Neudorf, to the Pacha Osman Oglon; the left was under the orders of the Pacha of Peterwaradin, and opposed to the Poles near Herrnals, while the vizier himself led on the centre. Still he insisted that the Kiaja Bey should remain in the trenches, and support a continued fire against the enemy,—the few remaining soldiers and citizens, who, in the extremest need and anguish of mind, still held out the capital against such fearful odds.

The grand battle in the plains was opened by the left wing of the Christian army; the Turks disputed every foot of ground along the vineyards, so as to render the progress of the Austrians extremely slow and doubtful. At length, they began to gain ground, and towards mid-day, the whole of the allied army had occupied its several stations in the plain. The Christians presented a half-circle, extending from Dornback, as far as the river; and, in this position, the combat was commenced at every point. On the left of the Turks, the result was for some time doubtful. Ibrahim Pacha succeeded even in repulsing the Poles, but Sobieski, who had slain many of the enemy with his own hand, and among others, a pacha, returned with such impetuosity to the charge, as compelled the bravest Mussulman to recoil. Meantime, the Duke of Lorraine, penetrating the right wing of the Turks, behind Dubleing, there maintained a fierce struggle, which ended in his driving them back, without being deterred by the fire of six cannon, from an entrenchment which still bears his name, and pursued the enemy as far as Weinheim. The Poles,

however, with their valiant king at their head, were first and last in the strife, as in the pursuit. Sandor Szlatinski, who fought in the van, leading on one of the most gallant regiments, not far from the king, soon approached the city, bearing down the broken ranks of the Mussulmans. The fire of their artillery had ceased; the flight of the Turks was seen from the towers and walls, and repeated discharges of cannon from the ramparts proclaimed the joyous tidings to the inhabitants. At the same instant, the Schauffen gate, and the remaining garrison, sallied forth, desirous of sharing, in some measure, in the glory of the day. The battle, however, was still maintained in some parts of the field; but the presence of the Poles every where inspired terror among the infidels, and these gallant spirits had already won their way as far as the glacis.

The grand vizier commanded the standard of the prophet to be planted firmly before his tent, and proclaimed on all sides, that every true Mussulman must rally round the sacred symbol of his faith. Numbers gathered round him, forming a sort of sacred band of Ottomans, round which the destinies of their religion and their country yet seemed to linger. Placing himself at their head, and gathering strength step by step, the grand vizier rushed into action with the Poles, who, with rare intrepidity, sustained the desperate shock, without recoiling a single foot of ground. At the same time, the wretched Mussulmans were attacked in the rear by the garrison; but still defended themselves with the resolution of despair. They were

nearly all cut to pieces; and the Poles, who that day performed prodigies of valour, actually met the feeble soldiers of the garrison face to face, after annihilating the ranks of Mussulmans which had stood between them. It was a singular and affecting moment: here, indeed, was their deliverance crowned, and by the very hands which had accomplished the redemption of Austria, of Europe, and perhaps of the Christian world. The saviours and the saved recoiled from their dread work as they thus suddenly met; the sternness of the soldier, and the fierce thirst of carnage, died momentarily away; they stopped, and surveying each other in silence, then rested upon their arms. The Austrians soon burst into loud hurrahs of admiration and gratitude for their deliverers, who, even at that moment, had rescued them, surrounded as they were by overwhelming numbers, from imminent death. One of these, whom Szlatinski had saved when at the point of an Ottoman's sword, now ran forward, and seized his hand. They started as they gazed into each other's features, — the colour fled from their cheeks: was it—could it be possible, that the two now folding each other in amity, had last parted in the grasp of deadliest hate?

Yes; true as it was strange, Szlatinski, and his rival, Scalvinoni, each of whom believed the other to be then lying dead in his grave, had met, battling in the same cause. Had each beheld an apparition, he could not have started with a stranger and wilder look; but Scalvinoni recognised his deliverer in his rival, and, exchanging looks of mutual forgiveness, they grasped each other's hands,

and uttered a few brief, incoherent words of welcome and gratitude on the part of the Austrian, like beings who had met in another world.

At the same moment, the sound of trumpets and cymbals was heard to the left of the glacis, and they joined Prince Louis of Baden, who, at the head of the men of Wurtemburg, had penetrated as far as the counter-scarp before the Schauffen gate, and attacked the Turks in the centre. The grand vizier still defended himself with difficulty, at the head of the Janissaries, and other veterans, who had rallied round the standard of the prophet, in a position at Lollewich; but he was there attacked by Sobieski, who, after an obstinate struggle, compelled him once more to fly. Towards evening, the fate of the Turks was decided. The vizier made his escape, most probably only to retard the evil day for a short time; there being no doubt that, on receiving tidings of his defeat, the sultan would present him with the fatal bow-string.

General Dunerwald was also one of the heroes of this memorable day. On learning that in an adjacent island, the Turks were slaying their Christian captives in cold blood, he threw himself, on horseback, into the Danube; the body-guard followed his example, and they arrived in time to save a great number of unfortunate prisoners, while their executioners perished, either by water or the sword.

Meanwhile, Sobieski and his Poles had taken possession of the grand vizior's tent, the treasures it contained, his war-steed, and the whole of his costly equipage. The king resolved to pass the night, beneath this barbarian canopy; for after two days' forced marches, the toils and achievements

of that terrific battle, both the monarch and his army stood in no common need of repose. Only part of the army pursued the Turks as far as Fischament, consisting chiefly of the Austrian divisions. The Duke of Lorraine sent off his aide-de-camp, Count Aversperg, the same evening, to Durrenstein, with tidings of the victory to the emperor. It was thus, on the day consecrated to Christian worship, that the imperial capital, the seat of Christianity, was delivered from extreme peril and sufferings; while the followers of the false prophet saw the glory of so great a conquest vanish for ever from their view.

During the night, the conqueror's fires blazed over the enemy's camp, and illuminated the environs of the town; true *feux de joie* were sent up by the exulting inhabitants, strangely contrasted with the terrific fires which had lately enveloped the trembling capital. Count Stahremberg, to obviate the least apprehension of confusion or disorder, issued orders that no one should be permitted to quit the interior, until the following morning, when the gates were to be thrown open. How many, that night, sat absorbed in anxiety and suspense, at the fate of the absent objects of their affection. Among these were the lovely Catherine Szlatinski and her friend Julia, whose rejoicings at the wonderful event, could not reconcile them to the fearful hazards encountered by those they loved.

On the morning of the 13th of September, throngs of the citizens rushed forth to visit the Turkish camp; some scaled the half ruined walls, and leaped into the ditches below; while the gates and streets were filled with the exulting multitude. The

camp was found to contain immense wealth;—magazines of every kind, jewels, arms, horses, and more than fifteen thousand tents, with provisions and utensils of all descriptions. The whole of these *spolia opima*, was given over to the people as a recompense for their fearful sufferings and gallant defence.

Count Stahremberg, followed by his staff, now paid a visit to the king of Poland, who received the veteran defender of the capital as a friend and a brother. They were joined by the Duke of Lorraine, and the three warriors repaired together to examine the state of the fortifications, and ascertain the extent of what would be necessary to repair them. The morning was sultry, and a glorious sun shone resplendently upon the scene.

Meanwhile, Catherine, overcome by a variety of contending emotions, had retired to her own apartment. The capital was saved. Sandor lived, and still loved her. But, alas! she had promised to obey her mother's wishes, and to take the veil;—and the maimed rites of her marriage, offered no sufficient obstacle. Throwing herself on her knees, she appealed for aid and counsel, from Him alone who can direct his creatures in the hour of trouble: she arose refreshed and resigned, and then retiring to rest, slept with the soft calm of innocence and peace, till the morning sun broke upon her slumbers.

The first thought which visited her pillow, was that on that day she would once more behold the friend and betrothed of her youth. Her heart beat high, as she looked forth and beheld only joy and festivity throughout the streets of that great capital. All was in a tumult of triumph and exultation, such

as so wonderful and unhoped for a victory was, calculated to excite; every street and square teemed with happy throngs, applauding the bravery of the gallant Poles, and their hero king; and, behold! in the midst of one of those festive groups, she caught the white plumes of a Polish Hulan, high towering above all heads. She felt her heart leap with conscious love; for it was on that spot but two months previously, she had the last glance of the retreating figure of the noble Sandor. But now he was rapidly approaching her,—nearer, and yet more near. Yes, it was her lover-husband; she had felt it could be no other, and a quick half stifled cry of joy burst from her lips. At the same moment, she ran as if to greet him—then as suddenly drawing back, she stood confused and breathless, upon the threshold of her chamber. Oh, no! how could she in the presence of others, give expression to the bounding joy and tenderness which glistened in her eye, and animated every feature—every fibre of her sensitive being. But the happy soldier had already caught sight of the charming vision; and ere she could recover herself to composure, he was at her side; he held her in his arms, and both partook of that rapture of restored love, which they found no words to express. Not a person in the household had yet arisen; he took her back into her chamber, and there they were for some time eagerly engaged in conversation, and amply repaying themselves for all the anxieties and exertions they had undergone.

How much had they not to ask each other? and the tears fell fast from the sweet girl's eyes, as

she recalled to mind the agony she had suffered on first hearing of the supposed fatal result of the duel.

"Ah! my dear Catherine, and how learnt you that?"

She told, in broken accents, or rather sighs, as she involuntarily pressed the hand which held her own: "Alas!" she murmured, "was it possible that I should not be aware of an event in which you were so deeply interested, dear Szlatinski? — not the least thing but I knew, as well as I do that you have just saved the life of an officer at the risk of your own. I heard it yesterday — every particular of it."

"You heard it yesterday!" exclaimed Sandor, "why, my sweet Catherine, that is hardly possible — it happened but yesterday, and in the evening."

"I knew of it yesterday, at eight o'clock."

"By what miracle, my love?" inquired the soldier, a little anxiously.

"By him whose life you saved — by M. de Scalvinoni."

"What! hurried he to your house, at the moment of his return! — is he then admitted at any hour pleasing to him?"

"Dearest Sandor!" exclaimed the alarmed girl, in a tone of deep tenderness; "is there yet a shade of your most unreasonable jealousy remaining?" And such was the beautiful truth and touching passion for *him*, breathing in her whole voice and looks, as to carry full conviction to his mind.

"Yes, best of cousins," he observed, "I for ever abjure my unjust suspicions, both of you and of

him. Scalviponi is, perhaps, a little presumptuous —a little vain of his fine figure, and his success with frivolous women; but he has not a bad heart. I saw him yesterday conduct himself like a hero, and his frank bearing towards me after our duel, was that of a generous, noble-minded gentleman. No! since he confesses to you, that he owes his life to me, I feel it is impossible that he can wish to deprive me of a treasure more precious in my eyes than words can tell!" and his voice trembled, and his eyes were bent on her with a rapturous tenderness, which told her how deeply rooted was the youthful passion, which had grown and strengthened with his growth.

"Nor would it be an easy task for him," replied Catherine, with equal fervour, yet smiling as she spoke; "do you imagine he could deprive you of me? — No, Sandor, you do not. Why! I have only seen him twice since you left us, and then I only saw the hand which had wounded one so dear. Yesterday he came to visit the lady of Dunerwald, to bring her tidings of her husband—of you yourself; and he had the delicacy to refuse even to see me."

"Then pardon, pardon, my love," cried Sandor: "I own all my faults — I was wrong to harbour the shadow of a doubt; but it is the last; and this be a new test of my unbounded affection for my sweetest betrothed!" and he folded her passionately in his arms as he spoke.

"But, oh, heavens!" exclaimed Catherine, "say not that word betrothed — you remind me of my promise to my mother and father Isidor."

"What mean you, love; it is a sweet word — for it is my sweetest hope — on which all my future happiness rests — what promise then?"

"I beseech you, dearest Sandor," was the reply; do not let us dash with grief, the bliss of restored delight like ours — such as these dear, too brief moments give. Whatever may happen you will live in my heart — my beloved cousin — my only friend on earth! But I must awake my mother!" she exclaimed, extricating herself with difficulty from his arms: "it is but right she should partake of our joy — in beholding one whom she really so much loves."

Away she ran,—but almost as soon returned with a kind summons from the lady of Volkersdorf, for Sandor to attend her in her chamber, where he was received with the most gratifying expressions of regard. Soon, however, the good aunt began to read him a severe lecture upon the crime of duelling, which she declared was only a polite name for wilful murder, and then intreated of him to recount, with the utmost exactness, all the particulars of the grand rout and slaughter of those horrid infidels and barbarians—the bloody-minded Turks. She could not hear enough of the terrible amount of slain, but bade him repeat it, and counted it over and over upon her fingers, to be certain she missed none of the tens, twenties, thirties, forties, fifty-thousands; and there she stopped, with exclamations of heart-felt delight. Then giving them a few no less hearty maledictions, she trusted there would be no more fear of their return; on which Sandor exchanged a smile with his beautiful cousin, ob-

serving; "Certainly, I think not,—if we are counting the vast horde of them we have killed."

But Catherine was too happy to listen to these astounding details, which called forth so many notes of admiration from her pious mother. She sat with her eyes fixed on Sandor,—her ears drinking in the accents of his manly voice, without understanding a word of all the absurdities uttered by the weak old dowager of Clamm castle.

The only thing which now troubled the fair girl, was the idea of a cloister, and being separated from her beloved cousin. Had he been lost to her, she could entirely have resigned herself to such a fate, and ceased not to weep over him in her solitary cell: but now it was different; he appeared in all the charm of lofty mind and manhood, crowned with victory, beloved by his prince; with love and joy beaming in his countenance, and throwing himself, and all he possessed at *her* feet.

Oh! how could she refuse? how could she consent to part with him more? But the time had come,—the siege of the capital was raised; and the gates of the convent were open to receive her; nor would the fears and superstition of her mother, directed by the holy father, allow her to retract.

Often, then, the tears started into Catherine's eyes, as she gazed on the noble features of Sandor, every day becoming more dear to her,—the hope of being united to him, grew hourly more delightful to her; and all her desires, her every thought, became centered in that one cherished idea.

The mother, the daughter, and the nephew, were engaged in an interesting conversation, when a royal order from the Polish king summoned his

favourite officer to his side. Sobieski was about to make his solemn entry into the Christian capital, which, as well perhaps as Christendom itself, he had just rescued from the grasp of the triumphant moslem, who, but for his little nation of heroes, had laid Europe prostrate before the victorious crescent, and the creed, which proclaims no conqueror but God, and that Mohammed, his sword, was also his prophet. The royal Pole invited his brave young adjutant to meet him in the church of the Augustines, there to chaunt the *Te Deum*, in honour of the splendid victory they had achieved.

The soldier embraced his aunt, and his fair cousin, and while he girded on his sabre, observed with a speaking smile to Catherine, that his Polish majesty had guessed well where he was likely to be found; and then, with a peculiar expression, entreated of the ladies, that they would not fail to be present at the grand ceremony in the metropolitan church. Catherine had no difficulty in persuading her mother, and the Lady of Dunerwald herself proposed to conduct them to the solemn scene.

The magnificent procession of Polish conquerors, made their military entrée by the gate of Slubenthor, for all the others were, up to this time, barricaded. Preceding the great king, were displayed the Austrian banners, and those of Poland pierced through and through with balls; and, led in a leash, appeared the war-horse of the terrible grand vizier. Behind the royal and victorious Pole, rode the Duke of Lorraine, Count Stahremberg, the elector of Bavaria, while the prince of Poland, and the emperor of Austria, were at his side.—And then followed the whole of the Polish and Austrian

officers, without observing any other order or rank, than that which the superior valour of the honoured Poles had justly entitled them to. Sandor Szlatinski rode near his royal master, and next him appeared his former rival, Scalvinoni, now his friend, conversing in the most confidential manner. Masses of the people pressed upon this strangely combined retinue of royal kings and warriors; for they felt that to the great Sobieski and his heroic Poles, not only was Austria herself, but entire Europe, and perhaps Christendom, at that hour indebted for their salvation. What shouts of triumph! what plaudits of the great Polish hero, and his army rang through the air! when in the wake of, the national colours were borne captive, the numerous horse-tails of the pachas and commanders, seldom before seen in the procession of a victorious foe.

The countless multitudes pressed on to gain a sight of the hero of the day; to catch a sight of the royal Pole; to touch, if possible, his war-horse, his military robes, his arms; — but that was too great a boast. It was enough to tell their children that they had been near — had seen the great Sobieski, the saviour of their country, the deliverer of Vienna, and of its trembling monarch, — and fresh shouts of exultation rang through the city, as he was about to enter the cathedral, from thousands of voices which, before his appearance, had sunk into the lowest key of abjectness and despair.

But, at the moment when he alighted, and marched into the sacred edifice, the various bells and clocks of the public halls and temples, before silent, burst into a mighty peal of triumph and

gratulation. It was then that Catherine, who, with her mother and kind friend, had already obtained a full view of the proceedings from the gallery, fixed her eyes upon that gallant king, so admired by him she loved, — but, when the latter appeared, she had no longer eyes even for royalty and glory itself.

The whole of this splendid and heroic procession advanced towards a chapel constructed in the midst of the nave; where they threw themselves upon their knees, and poured forth their gratitude to the great God of battles, for the Almighty support which he had been pleased to afford them in the cause of the pure and true religion of Christ.

When mass was concluded, the polish king, whose piety was not surpassed by his fame in arms, advanced towards the altar, and himself gave out the *Te Deum*, which was replied to by a sudden flood of sacred song — the rich choir of timbrels and of horns, mingling with the vocal music of thousands of voices, swelled upon the air. And soon the venerable bishop ascended into the pulpit, and in a discourse which had for its text, "there was a man sent by God, whose name was John,"* he eloquently held forth on the grand topic which absorbed all minds and hearts. As he spoke, all eyes were directed towards the royal Pole, John Sobieski, and his gallant train. During the *Te Deum* thirty cannon, placed upon the rampart, gave forth their terrible voices, as if to confirm the

* An apt allusion to John Sobieski, whom all writers of the times agree in extolling as the most chivalrous of princes.

truth of the preacher's statement, in honour of their heroic deliverer.

At length his august majesty, surrounded with all these glorious marks of homage, retired from the church. He then received his numerous friends and companions in arms, and Szlatinski, with marked pleasure and delight. Next the people of rank, and spectators of the gallery, approached the spot where he stood to gain a nearer sight of the deliverer. Szlatinski was soon at the side of his fair cousin, and her mother, whom he led forward to introduce to the great king. It was now that an incident took place, which attracted all eyes. When the fair Catherine was presented, Sobieski saluted her with an air of mingled gallantry and tenderness; then, turning towards the awe-struck, and admiring dowager, he spoke to her a few words, at the same moment taking the hand of his young officer, and placing it in that of the fair Catherine, which he had still held in his. The Lady of Volkersdorff could only bow obedience to his royal wishes, while a joy they could not suppress, flashed from the eyes of the delighted cousins, whose union was thus sanctioned by an authority, from which there could be no more appeal.

The monarch and his staff then proceeded to the mansion of Count Stahremberg, who had prepared for them a magnificent entertainment; while the throngs of citizens now rushed towards the Turkish camp, — some out of curiosity, others bent on pillage; and the immensity of treasures seemed fully to recompense them for all their previous terrors, and their loss.

And soon appeared amidst them the good Bishop

of Collonitz, who, accompanied by several ecclesiastics and magistrates, proceeded to examine the field and camp. The faithful Kolschutzki had directed his attention to a treasure of a very different kind; more than five hundred Christian orphans were found abandoned by their cruel captors, — destitute, without raiment or a morsel of food. This to him was the most precious booty of the day! he had them tenderly relieved, and conducted into the city, where they were apportioned out in one of the humane societies over which he presided.

In the evening, the King of Poland returned to his own camp near Ebersdorf. The surrounding atmosphere was infected with the smell of decayed carcasses of men and animals, which it had not been possible to discover and inter. But this was Sobieski's next care; and having refreshed his troops, he instantly set out on a vigorous pursuit of the Turks in Hungary.

Sandor, the happy lover, accompanied him as far as Oran, where the generous king freed him from all farther service, permitting him to return to Vienna, and accomplish the long-wished-for union, which he had prepared for him. But the grateful soldier would not avail himself of his royal master's offer, till he had promised subsequently to restore him once more to active service, and the hope of benefiting his country.

THE END.

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